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THE ENGLISH PEOPLE OVERSEAS

VOLUME II

BRITISH INDIA

1600-1828

BY

A. WYATT TILBY

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE whole of this volume has been carefully revised for reprinting. In the first part the alterations are only verbal; but two new chapters—on the last Maratha War and the Ocean Highway of Britain—have been added towards the end, and the whole of the last Book has been recast and in part rewritten.

A. WYATT TILBY.

HOW-STEAN, CAMBRIDGE ROAD,
WIMBLEDON, *September* 1910.

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THE ENGLISH PEOPLE OVERSEAS

Book VI

THE EUROPEAN INVASION OF ASIA: 1498-1757

CHAPTER I

THE UNDISCOVERED ORIENT

To the Grecian and Roman world Asia was little more than a name. The cities of Asia Minor were indeed linked with the civilised states that had sprung up around the Mediterranean. The expedition of Alexander the Great had made a temporary bridge between East and West. The products of China were transported slowly by adventurous merchants to the marts of Europe. The artistic wares of India were carried equally slowly by raft and boat across the ocean to Suez, or by lagging caravan overland through Persia to Damascus. And the students of Athens and Rome had some rudimentary ideas of oriental geography, which their maps and manuscripts have preserved. But to the Greek the world was Greece and barbarism; to the Roman the world was Rome, and again barbarism. To the north of the Alps they knew of great cold lands inhabited by savages. In Africa, to the south of the few Latin cities that modern discoverers have disinterred, they knew of great hot lands, mostly desert, inhabited by wandering negro tribes that were hardly human to the cultured European. To the west the Atlantic rolled unexplored,

and the Pillars of Hercules were the gates of the world and the limit of human knowledge. To the east, beyond Asia Minor, the same cloud of mystery hung, and the great continent was peopled only by the imagination of poets and the speculations of philosophers, both equally fantastic. There lay the civilisation of China, where a unique form of human life was evolved; the only unchanging, undestroyed civilisation that the world has seen. There lay Japan, where institutions curiously analogous to those of feudal Europe were developed centuries before knight and squire and lady stood for the chivalry of the West. There lay Tibet, the sacred home of the world's greatest religion; and to the south lay India, whose people, though still Asiatics, were separated from the rest of Asia by an almost impassable barrier.

But the empires, the arts, the literatures, and the philosophies of the East were unknown in ancient Europe; and Asia likewise continued its tranquil, passive way, ignorant of the subtle Greek and the forceful Roman. It was very gradually that knowledge came. European travellers penetrated to the East but seldom, and those who returned filled their narratives chiefly with accounts of 'the anthropophagi and men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders.' The Middle Ages saw little change from older times. Only Marco Polo can be said to have brought back any real information from the Orient; and even that accurate explorer was often misinformed. The other writers on Asiatic matters are sufficiently characterised by Sir John Mandeville, the best known to English readers, and the most popular author of his time.[1] But his book, full of childish fables and astounding adventures as it is, was less extra-

[1] Whoever wrote the work which goes by the name of the worthy knight, and which is now known to be a forgery, he was at least an entertaining liar. I can hardly say so much for the other travellers of the time, who are generally as dull as they are inaccurate. An exception may perhaps be made in favour of one Friar Jordan, a fourteenth-century author, the more intimate details of whose descriptions might well have caused some scandal among his clerical brethren.

ordinary than others on the same subject. Whoever peruses the lengthy collections of mediæval voyages that repose in our libraries, may indeed gain much curious insight into the state of ignorance that then prevailed in Europe; but he will assuredly find little trustworthy information about Asia.

Nevertheless the very mystery which hung over the Orient made it the more attractive. Its unknown riches were the theme of many a poem and many a wild romance. The great Musalmán kingdoms of the East were regarded with awe. The culture of Bagdad was justly celebrated in the West. Palestine was the land of God, the Holy Land; and when it fell before Islám, it became the one desire of Christendom to restore the sacred soil to the true faith.

Then for the second time Europe and Asia met in arms. But the Crusaders achieved no real success; and two centuries of warfare with the Saracens left the opponents as they had begun. There was no sign whatever of any European superiority; on the contrary, the Christians had learnt much from the opponents whose religion they hated, and whose strength they feared. At one time, in fact, it seemed that Europe was fated to fall before the onward march of Asia; and the close of the Middle Ages saw the Byzantine Empire in the hands of the Turks. Constantinople still remains largely oriental in character, as the European capital of an essentially Asiatic state; but all danger of another Musalmán invasion died away soon after its fall in 1453. And the first successes of the Portuguese in India a few years later were the beginning of European dominion in the East.

Enmity between the two continents was instinctive and inevitable, as a matter of race and creed, and the terror that springs from ignorance.

We look back to-day on the history of Asia as on a volume in an unknown tongue. We turn its pages industriously, but its significance we fail to realise. It is only a sentence here and there that we can understand. To the world at large

there is no Asiatic history, save in the conquests of alien nations; to the student there is also no Asiatic history, but in another sense. The field is too great for generalisation. There is no Asiatic thought; there is no Asiatic character; there is no Asiatic religion. The differences between civilisations are matters of race, not of continents; and there is no one Asiatic race. There is as much distinction between Chinaman and Hindu as between aboriginal American and aboriginal African. There can be no Asiatic synthesis. The contrasts of Asia are not the contrasts of Europe. The Spaniard and the Saxon, the Teuton and the Gaul have developed in varying directions, but they have many points in common; the radical differences between Mongol and Hindu come in an altogether different category.

CHAPTER II

INDIA

The English East India Company was founded on 31st December 1600. The first Dutch voyages to the East had begun a few years before; the Dutch East India Company was founded a few years later. The first French East India Company was formed in 1604; the first Danish Company in 1612. The Portuguese had already been trading regularly for a century in the eastern seas; a German corporation was likewise formed a century later. And between these six nations of Europe the prize of Indian commerce was disputed for over two hundred years, until it ultimately rested in the hands of the English.

The purpose of all save the Portuguese was at first trade, not empire. The Europeans who came to the East held generally but little communication with the natives. The main reason for the existence of India, in the eyes of the

merchant, was the enriching of the West, and particularly of his own country, or the commercial corporation by which he was employed. The standpoint of the missionary, if higher, was in one sense scarcely more useful. Looking on the millions of Asiatics with pity, as lost souls doomed to eternal tortures, he laid down his life in the heroic attempt to draw a few fish into the net of salvation.[1]

But merchant and missionary alike, proud in the superiority of the true civilisation and the true religion, had little sympathy with the people by whom they were surrounded. They were generally ignorant of the languages of India. The existence of a literature and philosophy rivalling those of Europe was not suspected; indeed they could not be, guarded as they were by jealous care by the Indians themselves. And to the European, the religion of the Hindu was not merely false; it was a contrivance of the devil to keep poor savages from the true faith. Christianity recognised in Mohammedanism an old foe; in the various forms of Hinduism it saw nothing but a debased superstition. The modes of life and national customs which had grown slowly during thirty centuries were not understood. The art of the East, which delighted to decorate with lavish hand what nature had so lavishly given, was stigmatised as barbaric. The architecture of India, differing fundamentally alike from the sombre, mystic Gothic and the proudly pure renascence styles of Europe, was necessarily condemned by critics who could see beauty only in the buildings with which they were familiar.

To men such as these, it is little wonder that the East remained a sealed book. And the Indians themselves kept aloof from the invader. They, too, had the same pride of

[1] The Portuguese evangelists followed hard on the steps of the explorers; but the first English missionaries did not appear in India until early in the nineteenth century. Lord Minto, who was then Governor-General, complained that they denounced 'hell fire and still hotter fire' against all who were not of their way of thinking. He was forced to curb their activities to preserve the public peace.

race that animated the European. They, too, were satisfied with their own civilisation. Trained in the placid school of the East and enervated by a tropical climate, they looked with some contempt on the strenuous life of the Western, who seemed satisfied to spend his energies solely in the acquirement of wealth.

Primeval India.

But the true meaning of European influence in India cannot be understood without looking back to a time when no European had set foot there; when in fact there were no Europeans as we now know them even in Europe, but only those aboriginal tribes whose rude remains still excite the curiosity of the antiquary. To understand anything of the social and religious phenomena that have played so great a part in Indian life and the annals of British India, it is necessary to turn to the origin of Indian history, some two thousand years before the Christian era began.

The then possessors of that vast peninsula were rough tribes, who were still in the nomadic state which marks man's first advance above the beasts that roam in the forest. Each preyed on the other; and the rude instruments of primitive man perhaps equalised the superior strength of the animal. To raise the corn that had become a necessary of life, a method pathetic in its simplicity was used. The ground was burnt bare, seed was thrown on the fertile soil; and a good crop soon rewarded the exertions of the primitive farmer. When a further supply was needed, the tribe moved on to a fresh abode; the same process gave the same result; and there could be little reason for anxiety in that favoured land, where nature rendered toil almost superfluous. But despite the earthly paradise in which their lot had fallen, life can have had few attractions to the ignorant savages. If nature had given abundantly she had also cursed with no sparing hand. Existence was rendered hazardous by wild beasts, by serpents, by venomous insects, and by the deadly swamps engendered

in the tropical vegetation. Exposed to peril on all sides, it is little wonder that the aborigines believed the world to be ruled by demons, and strove to propitiate their evil deities by sacrifice. Remains of these tribes survive to-day, in a state scarcely better than that of their ancestors four thousand years ago. The magnificent land they inhabited was worthy of better men than these.

The Northern Invaders.

It is only with the immigration of the northern tribes that Indian history begins, as European history begins, however dimly, with the arrival of what seems to have been another branch of the same great family. We can form some idea of their life in Central Asia before the great exodus; but the life of the inferior race they supplanted has gone into silence. There is no record left of the half-formed, indistinct conceptions that stood for thoughts to the first human dweller in India. There is no echo more of his cry of anguish as he saw friend or child carried off by beast of prey or mysterious fever; his terror, his offerings, his occasional wild outbursts of madness, when, impatient of the religious fetters his ignorance had forged, he felt powerless to break them save by the murder of himself and others; all his petty life and struggles have vanished before the onward march of a superior race.

The earliest known invasion of India lingers on the borderland of history and imagination. What reasons impelled the northerners to leave their old settlements, to seek a path through the mountain fastnesses that guard the north of India, what vague unrest drove them to find new homes, we can only conjecture. But the struggle with the aboriginal Indian tribes still lives obscurely in the hymns of the sacred book of India, the Rig-Veda. The petitions for victory, the songs of triumph for success hardly won, the lamentations over comrades fallen in the hour of peril, tell us something of that primeval race-conflict. The commentators of a later age have allegorised the tales of battle into spiritual

combats with those universal powers of the air that in every religious system are so ready to lead men astray. But to the poets who first framed their hymns, and to their first hearers, dwellers both in a land not yet their own, threatened still by danger from man and beast, they must have appealed with awesome reality.

The Punjab was the first land occupied, and it became a basis for all future conquest. Slowly the aborigines were driven further and further downwards, overborne by the greater intelligence and moral force of the newcomers. After centuries of warfare, now grown very indistinct to a world that has seen the same tragedy so often enacted, the invaders became masters of India.

But a change had occurred in the course of the struggle. The aborigines were no longer driven from the land. In fact, they could not be; for they had no further retreat save the ocean, and they dared not adventure themselves on what must have seemed the wastes of infinity. They submitted perforce to the law of conquest; submissive in fact but not in will, they still cherished in their hearts a confused sense of injustice—a feeling that ever and again has broken out in passionate revolt against those iron laws of nature which decree the subjection of the lower to the higher man, the stagnant to the progressive.

Conqueror and conquered were destined to live together for all time. India became a world apart. On two sides of that enormous triangle the sea cut off communication with other lands. On the third, the great mountain ranges seemed an equally strong defence. Seldom indeed was the barrier broken.

The Religion of the Rig-Veda.

It is from the Rig-Veda, one of the earliest records extant of any branch of the human race, that we can form some idea of the men who first conquered India. To them, living in a world of marvels, a world whose course had not yet become tedious in the

passing of many generations, all things appeared in wonderment as to the poet. Looking on the ever-changing, ever-changeless order of nature; trying, as each generation that is not blind tries, to understand something of the hidden forces that animate river, mountain, tree or storm; still endeavouring to read the great riddle, the why and wherefore of human life; reaching later the half-despairing, half-rejected conclusion of its purposelessness; forming unconsciously the gods for their future generations to worship: thus in the Rig-Veda lies the record of their early thought. It is the key with which to unlock the ancient history of India.

The invaders of India had no settled theological system. The stern caste customs which in later times confined learning to the priests had not yet arisen. The head of the family, as in all primitive nations, undertook the simple rites of worship for his sons and dependants. The spirits of deceased ancestors, who were believed to have returned beyond the mountains to that forsaken fatherland of which some memory remained, were often honoured. Many gods were evoked in prayer; it was natural to see beneficent deities in the river that brought life and plenty to the parched land, in the majestic mountains that were a protection against invasion, in the spreading trees that offered shade. At times, indeed, came the higher thought that the entire universe, both as a whole and in its minutest parts, animate or inanimate, was pervaded and governed by one great deity, united and indivisible.

But that idea has always proved too abstract and perhaps too lofty for the crowd; and while in India it has been worked out to its logical end by the esoteric schools, the people at large have ever clung to the facile creed of Brahmanism. Its many gods offer the worshipper much choice; its spiritual ideals have risen and fallen with the life of the nation, reaching now into a lofty conception of humanity, and anon sinking to a debasing superstition that can reverence the self-inflicted tortures of the fakir.

But when the invaders made their first settlements in India, there were no holy places that could draw, as now, their thousands of pilgrims yearly. A people that can find its gods in nature needs no temples. Before the development of much that now seems most characteristic of Indian life, when the priests had not yet perfected the forms of ritual, and caste had not yet crushed the individual, each man could offer from his own house the sacrifice that pleased him to the god that he had chosen for his personal protector. And the passionate questionings that occur and recur in each book of the Rig-Veda show how far the poet-prophets who formed it were from believing they had solved the riddles that surrounded them. 'The stars up there that are seen at night,' cries one, 'where do they hide in the day? The sun, not hanging on to anything, not made fast, how comes it that he falls not from such height? By whose guidance does he travel? Who has seen it? How great is the interval that lies between the dawns that have arisen and those which are yet to arise? Of dawn and night, which of them is the older and which the younger? Who knows, O ye sages? They carry between them all that exists, revolving on one wheel. Where is the sun now? Who knows it? Over which heaven do his rays extend? What, indeed, was the wood, what the tree, out of which they fashioned the heaven and the earth? These two stand fast and grow not old for ever, while many days and mornings pass away. Where is the life, the blood, the self of the universe? Who went to ask of any who knew? Not knowing, I go to ask of those who know, that I may know, I who do not know: he who stretched apart and established the six worlds in the form of the unborn, did he also establish the seventh?'

Such deep queries, now high in hope, at times give way to despair. 'You will never behold him who gave birth to these things: something else it is that appears among you. Wrapped in darkness and stammering, wander through life

the singers of hymns.' The unread riddle reaches across the gulf of time; the helplessness of the first thinkers grappling with the unseen is echoed by our own. 'Nor aught nor aught existed then: not the aerial space, nor heaven's bright woof above. What covered all? Where rested all? Was it water, the profound abyss? Death was not then, nor immobility; there was no difference of day and night. That One breathed breathless in Itself: and there was nothing other than It. In the beginning there was darkness in darkness enfolded, all was undistinguishable water. That One which lay in the empty space, wrapped in nothingness, was developed by the power of heat. Desire first arose in It—that was the primeval germ of mind, which poets, searching with their intellects, discovered in their hearts to be the bond between Being and Not-Being. The ray of light which stretched across these worlds, did it come from below or from above? Then seeds were sown and mighty forces arose, Nature beneath and Power and Will above.'

But the singer knows no more; and the enigma that cannot be answered ends again in despair. 'Who indeed knows? Who proclaimed it here; whence, whence this creation was produced? The gods were later than its production—who knows whence it sprang? He from whom the creation sprang, whether He made it or not, the All-Seer in the highest heaven, He knows it — or He does not.' The poet stops abruptly. The terrible melancholy that could doubt whether the great author of all Himself understood the work He had made overwhelmed belief in the minor powers to which man had learnt to cling. Sun, moon, and river remained the deities of the people; but the thinker, striving steadfastly for the origin of life itself, saw the pettiness of the ideals that served the crowd. In baffled ignorance he flung away all that before had satisfied; and in one great negative turned hopeless from a problem inexplicable to the sons of men.

Such might be the higher thoughts of the inspired singer; but the people required a positive faith that allowed of spiritual peace. The poet himself in quieter moments returned to the older, lesser gods of nature; and could rejoice in the beauty of form and colour that they renewed every day. The sun was the impassioned wooer of the dawn; the dawn a timid maiden fleeing from the embrace of a too ardent lover. The sun again was the great protector and father, rising in might to visit and comfort his children after the terrors of darkness, conquering his enemies as he rose higher, at last to sink in triumph, or it might be, in clouds of defeat as his allotted time drew near. Agni, god of fire, was the mysterious mortal brother of man, whose home was the sun, the water and the plants, and whose parents were two pieces of wood that he devoured at his birth.

But from the plea of remorseful agony uttered when the unsolved mystery ever returned to perplex—'Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy; let me not yet enter into the house of clay; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy,' cries the poet—one sees dimly that the old faith was no longer sufficient. Symbols that had been accepted without demur in infancy became inadequate in the light of fuller knowledge. And the nation lay in danger as the upheaval of thought became more marked. The old road was henceforth impossible; but whither led the new? Half-unconsciously and perhaps not understanding the greatness of the thoughts working in him, the poet sees the change. 'I now say farewell to the father, the Asura; I go from him to whom no sacrifices are offered to him to whom men sacrifice. In choosing Indra, I give up the father, though I have lived many years in friendship with him. Agni, Varuna, and Soma must give way, the power goes to another: I see it come.' Encompassed with mysteries, seeking the unknown God, discarding the old creed as it became impossible, but still filled with sadness at the loss of a lifelong friend, the poets groped towards the new,

real truth that should bring peace to themselves and to their people.

In this change of belief we first mark the change of life that has made India what it is. With the settlement of the nation the time had ceased when each family was all-sufficing and independent. The specialisation of labour had begun; and with the separation of man from man as their work set them in different stations in the eyes of the world lay the first sign of the caste. That system sprang from the same root that brought forth mediæval feudalism in Europe; from the absolute necessity of an orderly succession of degrees in the general working of the state. The first castes rose naturally in India, as the organisation of the people became more complex; and these primitive social divisions were such as can be seen at some period in almost every country.

The Caste.

In the great Brahmanic code, the Laws of Manu of a later date, the principles regulating the castes are laid down. 'To Brahmans (the priests) he (Brahma) assigned teaching and studying the Veda, sacrificing for their own benefit; for others, the giving and accepting of alms. The Kshatriya (warrior) he commanded to protect the people, to bestow gifts, to offer sacrifice, to study the Veda, and to abstain from attaching himself to sensual pleasure. To Vaishya (the working class) to tend cattle, to bestow gifts, to offer sacrifices, to study the Veda, to trade, to lend money, and to cultivate land. One occupation the Lord prescribed to the Shudra, to serve meekly the other three castes.' In these few words we find the basis on which India has been founded, and on which its social scheme of life has been governed for more than twenty centuries. While the less steadfast western world has its customs which vary with every generation and with every kingdom, its philosophers who represent every shade of thought from anarchy to despotism, its empires that have been founded on religion,

on freedom, on revolution, or on mere brute force: the unchanging course of life in India has flowed on from generation to generation through the same channels. The brief revolt of Buddha appears now but as an episode in such stupendous annals: and save for the elaboration of the system, the world has not altered in the East, from the age of Socrates to the age of Herbert Spencer.

'The duty of Brahmans is to teach and to study the Veda,' declares the code. The sacred books were collected and systematised; the worship which each man had freely given as his heart moved him was now decked with an elaborate ritual, performed only by professional priests. They taught, they investigated science and doctrine; they made the laws; in their caste was concentrated the intellectual life of the land. They were not backward in asserting their power in the great code of Manu, which they originated. 'A Brahman coming into existence is born as the highest on earth, the lord of all created beings, for the protection of the treasury of the law. Whatever exists in the world is the property of the Brahman; on account of the excellence of his origin, the Brahman is indeed entitled to it all. The Brahman eats but his own food, wears but his own apparel, bestows but his own in alms; other mortals subsist but through the benevolence of the Brahman. Know that a Brahman of ten years and a Kshatriya of a hundred years stand to each other in the relation of father and son; but between these two the Brahman is the father. A Brahman, be he ignorant or learned, is a great divinity. Though Brahmans employ themselves in all kinds of mean occupations, they must be honoured in every way: for each of them is a very great deity.' Such was the orthodox doctrine, the ideal of unlimited power; but it was modified as necessity occasionally dictated. 'Kshatriyas prosper not without Brahmans; Brahmans prosper not without Kshatriyas. Brahmans and Kshatriyas, being closely united, prosper both in this world and the next.' An

alliance between moral and material force seems sometimes to have been necessary; nor is it only in the East that the priests and warriors have found interests in common.

The third class, the Vaishya, were the bulk of the people. Commerce and agriculture were in their hands: the day-labour, honourable, and in those fertile territories then not hard, belonged to them. But the division between trade and trade, which developed with appalling nicety in after centuries until every occupation to the very thieves and beggars formed a caste, had not yet taken place. The later and more minute classification, logically sequent as it was on the first division in the Laws of Manu, was part of the order-loving method to which India clung. The trade guilds of mediæval Europe, the trade unions of modern industrial life, offer but a faint comparison to the hereditary castes of India. Even the Venetian glass-blowers, the most exclusive of all Western societies, must hide its diminished head before the least important of its Hindu rivals.

The fourth caste that the great code recognised was the Shudra. 'One occupation the Lord prescribed to the Shudra —to serve meekly the other three castes.' Strictly speaking, they were of no caste. They had no rights. Their highest aspiration could be but to serve their superiors. All others were twice born, as the mystic doctrine of the East laid down: they alone were not. Esteemed lower than the domestic animals which the Hindu of caste held as friends, as protectors, and later as gods, the casteless man stood without the pale of humanity. None of the proud twice-born would hold communication with the Shudra. The very drinking-vessel from which he quenched his thirst was defiled. His touch was contamination. He alone, of all the things that God had made, was accursed. The twice-born lost his caste if he had sinned; he could be degraded to the level of the Shudra; but never could Shudra rise from slavery and contempt. The sadness of their fate and the drear monotony

of their life runs like a dark thread of tragedy through all the history of India. To be casteless is to be hopeless. But it is not in the literature of the land that we may look for their cry of misery, uttered or unuttered, that went up from generation to generation. Learning lay in the hands of the Brahmans alone; and they, busied with their schemes of a perfect life and an ideal philosophy, had no more interest in the Shudra than a modern sweater or rack-rent proprietor has in the wretched beings from whom he gains his wealth.

Buddha.

It was as a protest against this injustice, and against the growing ceremonialism of religion and the power of the priesthood, that Buddhism found its strength. The life of Buddha throws the soft light of mercy over the gloomy record of the time; and later generations, with a loving recognition of the human sympathy that he helped to bring back to earth, have surrounded his career with poetic legends that still teach their own lesson.

Siddartha, the founder of Buddhism, was a king's son. He was born close to Nepal, in Northern India, where the snowy bosoms of the Himalayas seem to touch the skies. Prodigies attended his birth; and all the portents declared that the new prince should be a great conqueror. This was perhaps no more than was proclaimed by courtiers as the future lot of every prince of every royal house; but the father of Siddartha had visions of prostrate peoples and captive monarchs that should bow before his son's strong arm. Later ages have remembered in another way the victory of the Prince of the Great Renunciation.

As he grew, all that the heart of man could desire was his. Sensual luxury and refined art, the most attractive that the age could boast, were poured out before him. But he was not happy. The palace seemed a prison; and a vague consciousness of misery without, in the unknown world that lay around, troubled the gentle heart.

The beauty of the legend that tells of his discovery of pain and suffering has immortalised it. When the king his father permitted him to come forth to see his subjects, a proclamation was made that all should be happiness among the people. The blind, the old, the maimed, the halt and lame must remain within; only the young and hale might come to rejoice before the prince who honoured them.

The day arrived: and as Siddartha rode in triumph, all indeed seemed bright. He too rejoiced; the misgivings that had troubled him faded. He had watched the perpetual war of beast against beast in jungle, lake, or forest; and had wondered as he saw the cruelty of slaughter hidden beneath the fair face of nature. But to mankind at least the gods had granted happiness.

He was quickly undeceived as an aged cripple groped his way across the street, begging an alms. The misery that could not be hid woke the prince from his dream of pleasure. He returned home sick at heart. 'I have seen that I did not think to see.' He could not be comforted as he thought of the sad fate that drew weak and strong alike to the same dark ending.

The very joy that his coming had brought to the people was not a part of their daily life; and he determined to see that life as it was lived on ordinary days, when no royal proclamation bade them rejoice. He wandered disguised and unknown through the city, seeing the common round of joy and sorrow that changes little from one generation to another. The pains of birth, the pains of death, the many pains that lie between, were spread before the prince; and more saddened than before, the tranquil ease of his own existence appealed no longer to him. The wife he had chosen, the luxury that surrounded him, brought no comfort to the prince who thought ever of the misery without the palace.

It was then that Siddartha renounced the glory to which he had been born, and wandered forth to beg his bread with the meanest; hoping to find in meditation some solution of the dark mystery of life. Six years he pondered; but no clue came to the riddle of the waste, the futility of life itself, so constant in its misery, so transient in its joy.

The legends tell of the deep humility, the broad humanity he showed. A casteless man lamented that he could not give him milk; the touch of the Shudra was accursed. The reply was full of pity for the slave that his fathers had made. 'Pity and need make all flesh kin. There is no caste in blood. Who doeth right deeds is twice-born, and who doeth ill deeds vile.'

The doctrine of caste that was eating like a canker into Indian life was confronted by the doctrine of equality, of a caste that could only be recognised as a man's work was good or evil. Full of pity for the weak, denouncing those whose wrong causes suffering, Siddartha found in the mystical doctrine of transmigration, of continual promotion or degradation in each successive existence, the solution of his problem: until, as life after life was passed on higher and higher plane, the perfect soul that had struggled free from the world's shadows could find peace at last in absorption with the infinite Nirvana.

Such principles as these struck at the heart of Brahmanism. The struggle between the two religions became long and ardent. The priests of the older dispensation were forced to adopt some of the tenets of their rivals; and the merciful humanity of the great prince softened a little for a time the rigid doctrines that had enslaved India. But the compromise proved fatal to Buddhism, as it weakened the popular resistance to Brahmanism; and it passed away from the land of its birth to other parts of Asia, where the gentle creed has brought peace to millions, as Buddhism still remains numerically the greatest of the religions of mankind.

But whatever relief it brought to China and Japan, in India the iron bands of caste again descended on the Hindus. The growth of observances and ceremonies increased unchecked, as ignorance and superstition descended on the people; and the terrible rite of widow-burning, introduced through a mistaken reading of a text in the Rig-Veda, is but the most notorious instance of many which might be adduced to show the degradation of India.

In the older days, the Upanishad, the books of Brahmanical philosophy, had indicated how high the ideal of life could rise. Certain sacramental rites ushered a new-born son into the world. At any time between seven and eleven years of age, when the little mind-atom had enlarged itself somewhat above mere wonderment, and had already accumulated the first few elementary facts of life, the child was sent from home to be educated. Returning after some twelve years, his own true life began. He was married; and with ritual and sacrifice and such daily work as was necessary, the wedded life passed as happily as might be. With the birth of the first grandchild his duty to the world was done. He retired into the forest to a contemplative life that was but a preparation for his end. Ritual and ceremony for him were no more; he had passed through the stage when they were necessary: and in the more advanced philosophy to which he had attained, their utter uselessness and even detrimental effect were recognised.

The Upanishad.

The last retirement was still admitted by the Laws of Manu; but as the Hindus sank from the former standard it was afterwards abolished; and there is a world of significance in the fact. The old ideals were slowly passing; and to replace them, came the worship of cow and monkey.

In all but material arts the nation seemed dead. Their craftsmen could still weave the wonderful fabrics that moved

the astonishment and envy of Europe. Palace after palace was built with oriental profusion; the workers toiled lovingly then as now, at dainty trifles still inimitable by the rougher hand of the West. But no new teacher came, whose higher thoughts should lead to new endeavours for the holy life; no great poet lived again among the people, to echo back new Vedas to his brethren of the past; no second Buddha came, when the message of the first had been driven out to other lands.

And meanwhile the distinction between esoteric and exoteric, that has more or less characterised all religions, but especially those of the East, became more strongly marked. The Brahman, proud of his creed, his philosophy, his purity, lived apart; taking little thought for those whom he no longer recognised as fellow-men. The Kshatriya, confident in their privileges as warriors, passed their days also; and when the hour of reckoning came, they were weighed in the balance and found wanting. For the Mughal and Mohammedan descended on India, and the stronger sons of war founded their kingdom among a nation they dispossessed and despised, even as the Hindus had conquered and despised those whom they had found in the land centuries before.

Still, however, the life of the village communities went on much as of old. The tides of war and victory rolled past and were exhausted in the struggle; but famine, plague, and savage beast were worse enemies, and brought more terror to the lower castes. Saint or pilgrim came or went; fakir and devotee begged and showed their useless wounds; generation after generation of caste and no-caste travelled alike into the great unknown; and the tradition of the blessed abode behind the northern mountains from which their ancestors had sprung yet lingered among the people.

CHAPTER III

THE ENGLISH EAST INDIA COMPANY: 1600-1700[1]

Although there is an untrustworthy tradition that an Englishman travelled to the Far East early in the ninth century, the first of our countrymen who is known actually to have set foot in India, is one Thomas Stevens, a Jesuit who landed at the Portuguese settlement of Goa in the year 1579. The letters which he sent home contained little that was remarkable, or that could not have been gathered from other sources; but they added to the lively interest that was already felt among all classes as to the possibility of opening up commercial relations with Asia. But indeed all the attempts that had been made by Englishmen of recent years to find both the North-East and North-West passages had been in order to open up trade with the Orient, and the companies which had promoted those enterprises hoped to reach India themselves in due course.

Four years after Stevens landed in India, three English merchants made their way overland to the East; but on

[1] Authorities.—There is no history of the East India Company which can be regarded as authoritative, but most of its transactions are preserved at the India Office in London, from which an abstract has been made by Hunter. The enormous number of pamphlets published in England, both condemning and defending the Company, which are collected at the British Museum and the Guildhall Library, are of interest, and frequently throw much light on the conduct of affairs by the directors. The official series of Indian records and Indian texts now being published promise to be of great value. Of the regular historians, Orme and Mill are good representatives of the older school; but every other writer has been superseded by the monumental works of Sir W. Hunter. I follow him on almost every occasion in preference to all other authorities: practically the only noteworthy point, indeed, on which I have ventured to differ from him was in the last chapter, where I have used the term 'northern invaders' instead of Aryan. It is a much debated problem whether philology alone can be considered a safe guide to racial origin, and many now incline to doubt whether the early union of the European and Indian peoples can be assumed, until at least additional corroborative evidence in other branches of science is adduced.

arrival at Goa they were imprisoned by the Portuguese, and nothing came of their enterprise, save that one of their number eventually entered the court service of the Great Mughal.

The East India Company, 1599.

The beginning of the direct commercial connection between England and the Orient twenty years later was curiously simple. Towards the close of the reign of Elizabeth the Dutch traders raised the price of pepper from three to eight shillings a pound. Mainly in consequence of this extortionate increase, though perhaps with some touch of romance still stirring in the hearts of the worthy citizens, the Lord Mayor and merchants of London met on 22nd September 1599, at Founders Hall, Lothbury, and there agreed ' with their own hands to venture in the pretended voyage to the East Indies, the which it may please the Lord to prosper.' Under their auspices, an association was formed on 31st December 1600, with the title of ' The Governor and Company of Merchants in London trading to the East Indies.' The association had 125 shareholders and a capital of £70,000 ; and the charter gave it power to export £30,000 in bullion, the same to be returned at the end of the voyage. The charter of incorporation was for fifteen years.

The First Voyage.

On 2nd April 1601 the first fleet for the East sailed from London, laden with £28,742 in bullion, and English goods worth £6860, such as glass, cutlery, and hides. Particulars of the vessels have been preserved and run as follows :—

Red Dragon, 600 tons, James Lancaster, master, with 202 men.

Hector, 300 tons, James Middleton, master, with 108 men.

Ascension, 260 tons, William Brand, master, with 82 men.

Susan, 240 tons, John Heywood, master, with 88 men.

Guest, 130 tons, accompanying the fleet as victualler.

The pilot was John Davis.

The fleet arrived at Sumatra without incident; a trading-house was founded at Bantam, and commercial relations were established with the king of Achin.

On the return of their vessels in 1603, with a cargo of peppers and rich spices from the Moluccas, Banda, Amboyna, Sumatra, and Bantam, the promoters of the enterprise realised a profit of ninety-five per cent.

There was thus nothing to distinguish the East India Company from the other corporations which had been formed in recent years for the purpose of trading abroad; the Russia Company, the Turkey Company, and the Morocco Company stood on the same footing, and might anticipate as good results. There was certainly nothing to indicate that the company which was formed on the last day of the sixteenth century would out-distance all its competitors, English and foreign, and at length develop into an empire.

But the first decade of the East India Company was smooth and prosperous, and the merchants of the time doubtless congratulated themselves on their success, as they gossiped on the Exchange, or counted their gains in the offices of Cheapside and Gresham Street.

Success naturally generated opposition and rivalry at home. There were some who were jealous of the Company; there were others who believed that the temporary export of bullion impoverished the home country; there were those who could not see any advantage in either trade or communication with foreign lands. But the East India Company proved singularly well qualified to defend itself. One or two extracts from the pamphlets published under its direction will show that it left no stone unturned to convince the public of the benefits conferred by the oriental trade.

The Opponents of the Company.

During a dispute that occurred in 1621, a tract was issued by one Thomas Nun to controvert the growing contention that 'it were a happier thing for Christendom (say many

men) that the navigation of the East Indies by way of the Cape of Good Hope had never been found out.' He pleaded that since the discovery of this route, 'the kingdom is purged of desperate and unruly people who, kept in awe by the good discipline at sea, do often change their former course of life and so advance their fortunes'; the new trade with the East, he urged, was 'a means to bring more treasure into the realm than all the other trades of the kingdom (as they are now managed), being put together'; indeed, 'since the beginning of the trade until the month of July last, anno 1620, there have been sent thither 79 ships in several voyages, whereof 34 are already come home in safety richly laden, four have been worn out by long service from port to port in the Indies, two were overwhelmed in the trimming thereof, six have been cast away by the perils of the sea, twelve have been taken and surprised by the Dutch, whereof divers will be wasted and little worth before they be restored, and 21 good ships do still remain in the Indies. First there hath been lost £31,079 in the six ships which are cast away, and in the 34 ships which are returned in safety there have been brought home £356,288 in divers sorts of wares which have produced here in England towards the general stock thereof £1,914,000. So there ought to remain in the Indies to be speedily returned hither £484,088. Pepper, mace, nutmegs, indigo, rum, silk, which would have cost £1,465,000 if purchased at the old rate, could now be purchased in the East Indies for £511,458.'

Again in 1628 a petition was made to the House of Commons showing that of late years 'some evil encounters, not only of the seas and enemies, but more especially the undue proceedings and actions of our professed friends and allies, have infinitely damnified the said traffic . . . the aforementioned disasters, and the carrying of foreign coins out of this kingdom into the Indies, have begot such causeless complaint in the mouths of many of His Majesty's subjects, of all

degrees and in all places of the realm, that the adventurers are thereby much discouraged to trade any longer under the evil censure of the multitude, desiring nothing more than to obtain their private wealth with the public good.' The trade was declared by those concerned in it to 'increase the strength, wealth, safety, treasure and honour of this so great a king and kingdom,' and it was vaunted that fifteen thousand tons of shipping, and two thousand five hundred sailors were already employed by the Company.[1]

Such replies had their effect, in saving the Company from suffering under the assaults of its enemies; but the assaults themselves continued, and a lively paper war was waged for over a century between the opponents. The nature of the attacks may be gauged from the titles of some of the later pamphlets. In the year 1681, for instance, was published a 'treatise wherein is demonstrated that the East India trade is the most national of all foreign trades, that the clamours, aspersions, and objections made against the present East India Company are sinister, selfish, or groundless.' This was for the defence, replying to the complaint that the shares of the Company were engrossed in few hands, and

[1] The East India Company grew into one of the greatest private shipping powers afloat. A special committee sat in London to control its marine; its vessels, which were armed against attack on the high seas, were celebrated throughout the civilised world, and the post of captain in the Company's fleet was highly esteemed as both an honourable and profitable occupation. The outward or homeward voyage might last any time from six months to a year; calls were made at St. Helena, and sometimes at Cape Town, for refreshment and water. But in spite of putting in at these and other places for rest and change of diet, scurvy, that ancient scourge of the sea, ravaged the ships on every voyage. Sometimes all the men were down with sickness, and unable even to unfurl the sails, or to navigate the vessel into port. The following records of the vessels of the Dutch East India Company, which Mr. Theal has transcribed in his *History of Cape Colony*, give an idea of the fearful mortality among the seamen. In 1693, for example, 221 men of the *Bantam* died of scurvy on the voyage between Holland and Cape Town; the *Goude Buys* had only 12 men in a crew of 190 that were not sick; the *Schoondyk* reported that 134 men out of a crew of 254 had died, and the whole of the remainder were down with scurvy. Many other cases could be cited; and it is improbable that the crews of English vessels suffered less from disease than the Dutch.

that the price of the stock, of which £100 then stood at £280, was too high. The complaint, indeed, was the best testimonial of its prosperity that the Company could have.

Another pamphlet of 1695 objected that they 'have not been pleased to make war upon any other nation but the English,' and speaks of 'the frauds which this Company exercises over the rest of the nation.' One dated 1730 is entitled 'a collection of papers relating to the East India trade, wherein are shewn the disadvantages to a nation by confining any trade to a corporation with a joint stock.'

It was not only rival merchants and capitalists who were envious; the Company for many years built its own ships, and thus roused the intense opposition of those who were injured thereby. '*Every man not his own shipbuilder*,' is the title of an angry philippic of 1778: and the 'dangers and disadvantages' of this enterprise had already been set out at length in 1768.

It was all of no use; the Company knew how to defend itself sufficiently well. The directors never hesitated to bribe their more dangerous enemies; the others they could disregard. The opposition continued as long as the Company existed; one of its most virulent antagonists indeed was James Mill, the historian of British India, whose prejudice is shown on every page of his voluminous work. But of more importance was the jealousy of competing merchants, and, at least in earlier years, the greed of the Crown. It needed considerable tact and not a little unscrupulousness for a rich commercial corporation to weather the political storms of the seventeenth century, and perhaps the greatest praise that can be given to the East India Company is that, attacked by rivals as it was both in Europe and Asia, it not only did not go under, but actually advanced considerably in wealth and influence. Its Indian policy changed from time to time as necessity dictated, and the early directors would have been aghast

Its Policy in England.

at the discretionary powers allowed to the Company's Indian servants in Clive's day: but the home policy hardly ever altered.

The East India Company possessed by law a terminable monopoly; and it was the first business of the Company to keep it. If any infringement of that monopoly was threatened a petition was at once lodged with the King or the Commons, whichever for the time being was the more powerful: and according to the motives most likely to influence the one or the other, the directors offered either a bribe or a loan, or if uprightness happened to be in fashion at the moment, a consideration of the advantage their trade was to the kingdom at large.

If these means failed, and a new competitor was fairly launched on the oriental trade, his capacity was gauged as quickly as possible. Did he appear of small importance, he was mercilessly crushed; was it a company of large capital but indifferent management, it was contemptuously let alone till its funds were exhausted, in the certainty that it must then withdraw from the trade, and its failure deter other adventurers. Should it be, on the other hand, an enterprise that promised success, the advantages of amalgamation were ceaselessly paraded, and sooner or later the two combined.

Such a policy could not be worked out all at once, or even for many years in its entirety; but it was evolved gradually in the same way that the simple body of independent merchants who formed the Company up to the year 1612 changed step by step into an oligarchy, or closed corporation, directing operations of enormous extent by means of committees and sub-committees.

By the year 1708 the work of the Company was systematised and the mere list of its officials and divisions shows how well arranged were its affairs. The shareholders were divided into Courts of Proprietors, from whom were selected committees, the members of which were after-

Its System.

wards called directors. The qualification for a vote in the Court of Proprietors was £500 in stock; the qualification for a director, of whom there were twenty-four, was £2000. The latter were headed by a chairman and deputy-chairman, and each director was to be re-elected annually. Thirteen directors formed a quorum, and meetings were held as often as necessary. The directors divided their work among ten committees and others were added later. These ten were :—

1. Of correspondence : its work was the most private and responsible of any; all Indian questions were referred to it, all diplomatic and political affairs, as well as matters of patronage.
2. Of law-suits.
3. Of treasury.
4. Of warehouses.
5. Of accounts.
6. Of buying.
7. Of the house : that is, the management of the office in London.
8. Of shipping.
9. Of regulating private trade : that is, to see that the Company's servants did not exceed the amount allowed by the Company's regulations.
10. Of checking private trade : that is, to discover and put down, or give orders to put down, the trade of other English merchants in the East, which threatened the monopoly of the Company.

But before the Company had become so imposing as to divide its work into sub-committees, it had undergone many vicissitudes; and had it not been for the extraordinary sagacity displayed by the directors, it would certainly have failed altogether. In 1604 already the shareholders were needlessly alarmed at a charter granted to Sir E. Michelborne, to trade with Cathay, China, Japan, Corea, and Cambay. In spite of its

Its Vicissitudes in England.

imposing character and pretensions, however, the latter scheme came to nothing, and in 1609 the East India Company had its own charter renewed in perpetuity, but terminable at three years' notice. In 1612 it was put on a joint-stock basis, but the operation of that system was as yet imperfectly understood, and the opposition that came from ignorance was naturally increased when both profits and dividends decreased. The general attack made on monopolies at this time looked threatening, though it passed without danger to the Company: but King Charles and the Duke of Buckingham claimed a share of the prize-money taken in the East. The directors protested, but Buckingham detained their ships when about to sail on the season's journey to India. The claim was then at once admitted, and an order made to pay; it cannot, however, be ascertained that the amount was ever actually made over.

But the profits continued to decrease, and fewer ships were sent out, although the general condition of England was prosperous; and it would seem that, had the management not been temporarily at fault at this time, things should have gone favourably, and oriental goods been sure of finding a profitable market.

In 1632 further subscriptions were required and obtained; but three years later the king granted a licence to another company, taking a share in it himself. Again the danger was serious, and the older Company remonstrated before the Privy Council: after repeated petitions, the king disallowed the rival licence; but new difficulties now arose, since more capital was required; and there were but few subscriptions, owing to the upheaval caused by the beginning of the Civil War in England.

At this time, too, the king seized on the Company's store of pepper in London to replenish his purse; he gave a bond to pay, but the debt seems never to have been settled. For the next few unquiet years, little information has been pre-

served as to the doings of the Company, and it may be conjectured from this and the political troubles of the day, that the business did not flourish.

Under the Commonwealth its privileges were again threatened, but eventually secured: by now, however, there was considerable confusion amongst the various stockholders, each of whom had entered the Company at different dates, and each of whom put forward different claims.

At last in 1658 a new Company was formed, which bought up the old at a valuation, as well as disposing of a rival that had disappeared. No sooner was the Restoration accomplished than the directors petitioned Charles II. for a renewal of their charter, which was granted; but trade again languished until new capital was provided in 1667. In that year sixteen ships sailed for India, and each year thenceforward more were sent, and with a more valuable cargo. In the same year, 1667, the first order was given for a product that afterwards became a staple of the Company's trade: the factors were 'to send home by these ships 100 lb. weight of the best tey that you can get.'[1]

All went smoothly from now until the year 1690, when the House of Commons decided on the formation of a new Company. Protests were in vain: Parliament obstinately

[1] The trade in tea soon became a source of great profit to the Company, as the taste for the beverage grew in England. In 1676 the agents of the Company at Bantam in Java were instructed to invest a hundred dollars annually in tea, which was probably the extent of the demand at home; but in 1684 a trading-station was opened at Canton, which became the centre of the Chinese export tea trade, and eventually led to a regular traffic with China in other things besides tea, as well as to diplomatic complications. In the early decades of the eighteenth century tea was already a popular drink among the wealthier classes in England; it was beyond the reach of the poor, however, for the greater part of the next hundred years. But the price fell continuously, and even the humble Uriah Heep could afford to drink it in his cottage at Canterbury, as well as the more prosperous Wellers at Dorking, in the later years of George IV. It may be noticed that in those days tea was generally served immediately after dinner, as is still the custom in some houses in Holland: not until Victorian times did 'five o'clock tea' become a social institution in England.

affirmed the 'right of all Englishmen to trade to the East Indies.'

But Sir Josiah Child, the chairman of the old Company, was prepared to meet opposition; he ordered the servants of that body in India to seize and imprison all Englishmen who might be found in the East, and who were not in the employ of his Company. The Governor of the Company's Asiatic stations in answer stated his willingness to obey commands, but weakly expressed his fear that the laws of England stood in the way of illegal confinement. Child's reply was sublime in its contempt for the home authorities: 'he expected his orders were to be rules, and not the laws of England, which were an heap of nonsense, compiled by a few ignorant country gentlemen, who hardly knew how to make laws for the good of their own private families, much less for the upholding of companies and foreign commerce.'

But Parliament, though unconscious of this contempt for its ordinances, had discovered that the Company was guilty of bribery to the extent of some £90,000 in one year: and the Commons, seeing a chance to score a point against the Upper House, impeached the Duke of Leeds for having accepted a gift of £5000.

There is small doubt that he was guilty; but through the adroitness of Child, the prosecution fell through. The two companies were now allowed to trade on equal terms; but this was not enough for the older body, accustomed as it was to the monopoly of Indian commerce. It therefore brought an accusation of piracy against its rivals at the Asiatic Courts, having first carefully provided some foundation for the charge.

'Two East India Companies in England,' it was said, 'could no more subsist without destroying one the other, than two kings': but the new company destroyed itself. To obtain its privileges, it had offered the enormous loan or bribe of two millions sterling at eight per cent. to the English Government; and when this was accepted and paid, there was

nothing left for working capital. It struggled on for a few years, subject to every financial embarrassment at home, and reviled, obstructed, and defamed by its more energetic and capable competitor in India: but it was obviously of no use continuing in this manner, and on 22nd July 1702 the two companies amalgamated. The union was made final and indivisible six years later.

The success of the original Company had been as fluctuating in India as at home. The first trading depots, or factories as they were called in the language of the time, were established at Bantam and the Moluccas, and others were attempted at Surat and Cambay. The two former aroused the hostility of the Dutch; the two latter were for a time frustrated by the Portuguese. Thus early was the Company made aware of the uncompromising enmity it would have to face from its competitors: but victory over the Portuguese in a skirmish in 1614 gave the English some reputation in India.

The East India Company in India.

They had already received a firman from the Mughal Emperor on 11th January 1612, giving them liberty to trade in his dominions; and the embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, two years later, did much to establish their position as legitimate traders in the East. From the despatches he sent home it may be gathered that the advisability of building forts in India had already been debated. 'If the emperor would offer me ten,' he wrote, 'I would not accept of one. . . . If you will profit, seek it at sea, and in quiet trade; for without controversies, it is an error to affect garrisons and land wars in India.'

Roe did something for his countrymen, too, in another direction. 'I have done my best to disgrace the Dutch,' he wrote, 'but could not turn them out without further danger.' He quickly realised the power of money in the court of an Asiatic potentate. 'Half my charge shall corrupt all this court to be your slaves.' Here again did the Company

receive its first lessons in an art at which its chief officials later became adepts. Efforts were now made to open up trade with the Spice Islands and with Persia; in the latter case with little result, in spite of an agent being sent to the court of the Shah.

In the Spice Islands it was another matter, but here the success of the English soon caused a collision with the Dutch. A treaty between the Governments of England and Holland was concluded on 17th July 1619, guaranteeing mutual amnesty; it was observed in the East for one hour, while the rivals saluted each other courteously from their ships. The ceremony over, war at once began again; and it culminated in 1623 in the Amboyna outrage.

The Struggle with Holland.

Amboyna was one of the great Dutch trading stations in Asia; and the competition of the English, which had never been welcomed, soon became uncomfortably keen in the neighbourhood. At length the Dutch attacked the English East India Company's factory there, seizing its occupants. These, consisting of ten Englishmen, nine Japanese, and a Portuguese, were told that in Dutch territory they must obey Dutch laws; they were tortured and found guilty of conspiracy to surprise the Dutch garrison, condemned, and executed. The charge may or may not have been true; but the judicial murder was at any rate a convenient, and, as the event proved, a not very expensive means of getting rid of a dangerous rival.

The Amboyna Outrage, 1623.

As soon as the news of the Amboyna outrage reached England, the country was in an uproar; and the directors of the East India Company inflamed the indignation to the best of their ability, by descanting on the barbarity of the deed, and especially on the horrors of torture. The latter was still a legitimate method of forcing a reluctant witness to speak in Holland, and it had not long been abandoned in

England itself; but popular indignation has a short memory when it is convenient not to remember; and the directors continually published pamphlets and ghastly pictures of the outrage, to ensure that there should be no slackening in the demand for revenge against Holland.[1] Litigation ensued, but the matter was not finally settled till thirty years later. The dispute was then referred to arbitration, the English claiming two and a half millions sterling compensation, the Dutch nearly three millions: in the end the East India Company received judgment for the insignificant sum of £3615.

The massacre practically stopped English enterprise in the East Indian archipelago for two centuries, diverting it to the mainland instead; but from that time till 1689 there was a bitter contest with Holland on the high seas and in the Indian peninsula itself. Neither English nor Dutch would be content without the monopoly of trade, and neither nation was deterred by excessive scrupulousness as to the means employed to gain it.

On the ocean the fight was fair and square as between seamen. In the Asiatic courts it was conducted by intrigue, and the impartial historian finds it difficult to decide which nation produced more finished experts in the useful art of deception. In the Asiatic markets the Dutch agents would buy up the whole native produce at a higher price than the English were able to afford, and sell their European stock

[1] The outrage indirectly gave a new play to the English language, for Dryden wrote *Amboyna* in 1673, in order to inflame his countrymen in general, and Londoners in particular, against the Dutch. The following lines from the prologue show the character of the play:—

> 'The dotage of some Englishmen is such
> To fawn on those who ruin them, the Dutch.
> They shall have all, rather than make a war
> With those who of the same religion are. . . .
> Be gulled no longer; for you'll find it true,
> They have no more religion, faith, than you;
> Interest's the god they worship in their State;
> And you, I take it, have not much of that.'

The play may have answered its purpose politically; but considered as drama it is very poor stuff.

so low that the English could not sell theirs at all. In the West again both nations tried their hardest to undercut each other. The Dutch on the whole seem to have been more successful at first, since theirs was a great state-trading company with practically unlimited funds at its disposal, whereas the English East India Company was a private enterprise frequently kept in check by the national hatred of monopoly; but the Dutch ruined themselves later by a short-sighted policy in not adapting themselves to the changing conditions of oriental trade, while the English kept fast hold of what they had, and were ever pushing forward for something more.

The Company's Servants.

Both English and Dutch East India Companies were absolutely dependent on the fidelity and industry of their servants in the East; and to judge by the results in India and the East Indies, both were served well. The directors of the English Company were indeed continually grumbling that their employees in Asia were dishonest to their masters and lax in their execution of their duties, and the Dutch archives would probably reveal precisely similar complaints. But the commercial corporation has yet to be found that is completely satisfied with the work of its employees. Serious and well-founded grounds for discontent there undoubtedly were on both sides, but the original fault generally lay with the directors.

Although to enter the service of the Company soon became known as affording a promising career to young men, employment at one of its Indian stations was valued rather for ulterior reasons than for any direct advantages. The pay was small; the voyage was tedious; the exile was long. The climate was not always healthy; it was frequently difficult or impossible to obtain the conveniences of life, and promotion was seldom quick. The service required of the clerks, at least in the lower grades, was monotonous and irksome. Yet to those who desired to escape from the limits

of their own narrow isle, or as it more generally was in those days of few travelling facilities, from the neighbourhood in which they were born, life in a strange country was full of romantic possibilities ; while it was always feasible to make a steady income, frequently a good competence, and occasionally to amass great wealth, by indulging in private trade. In the later days of the Company other opportunities offered, of extortion from the native princes and peoples, and the English in India were not slow to exact a profit from them as well ; but this was not until the Company had embarked on territorial sway. For the first century and a half of its existence the operations of the employees were restricted to private trade. It is true that this was forbidden, and that the directors did their utmost to suppress it. They complained with reason that the Company's servants looked after their personal interests before those of the Company ; but the pay was so small that they could not expect them to do anything else. The salary of the Governor of Madras, for instance, was only £300 yearly, and in 1664 he was given £200 extra on condition that he ceased trading on his own account. He accepted it, but it has not been ascertained that he took no further advantage of his opportunities.[1]

From the nature of the case, the directors in London could not keep a complete check upon affairs in India, and private trade continued as long as the Company was a commercial body ; even Clive was unable entirely to suppress it. But if the directors lost on the one hand, they occasionally gained with the other. Some of their agents in the East did more to extend their trade than the remissness or cupidity of a whole generation of clerks did to lessen it. In 1651, for instance, an English surgeon, who happened to be at the court of Bengal, was successful in curing diseases that had

[1] The Dutch West India Company made the same complaint that its servants carried on private trade ; but that great corporation was equally powerless to stop the abuse.

baffled the native doctors; and on being asked to name his reward, he obtained a state licence for the East India Company, which, on payment of three hundred rupees, allowed the corporation to carry on unlimited trade in the country without toll of customs. In 1664, again, the Company's servants at Surat repelled an enemy who attacked that city; the natives had already fled in fear; and on their return further privileges were granted to the defenders.

The Indian system of the Company was simplicity itself. Trade was carried on at a station, where English goods were exposed for sale to the natives, and where the natives could bring their own goods to be bought or exchanged. The Company's servants at each station were divided into ranks, named successively writer, factor, junior merchant, and senior merchant. Promotion was made from step to step. The stations were responsible to the presidencies, of which there were three, at Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta. Each of the presidencies was absolute and independent, except to the Company as supreme head; each was ruled by a Governor and a Council consisting of various members. None of the earlier servants of the Company have left any name; they seem to have been of average type, generally more or less capable and industrious. It was not until the next age that there was any opportunity for a great administrator; at present they were, and they could only be, business men pure and simple.

The Method of Trading.

The stations of the East India Company in India were at first mere unprotected European settlements; but the disturbed state of the country soon necessitated their fortification. In this step may be seen the germ of the territorial sway of the Company, as in the authority of the Governor and Council of the Presidency lay the origin of its later system of rule.

Territorial Acquisitions.

But the responsibility of owning and administering land in India was naturally shirked by the directors. A trading

company has nothing to do with government. And the East India Company in particular had been warned by Sir Thomas Roe not to copy the Portuguese and Dutch, but to remain contented with commerce. His advice had been followed, and good results had accrued. It was by no wish of the Company that it became anything more than a simple mercantile body. It possessed indeed civil, criminal, and martial jurisdiction over its own people in India; it obtained the power of making peace and war, and concluding treaties with non-Christian peoples. Such functions were recognised by the directors as necessary; but they had no desire for more, and for nearly a century they protested against any further power or responsibility.

The first sign of a change is in a despatch dated 1689. 'The increase of our revenue,' it says, 'is the subject of our care, as much as our trade; 'tis that must maintain our force, when twenty accidents may interrupt our trade; 'tis that must make us a nation in India; without that we are but as a great number of interlopers, united by His Majesty's royal charter, fit only to trade where nobody of power thinks it their interest to prevent us; and upon this account it is that the wise Dutch, in all their general advices which we have seen, write ten paragraphs concerning their government, their civil and military policy, warfare, and the increase of their revenue, for one paragraph they write concerning trade.'

The remarkable change of view shown in this despatch was due to two or three different causes. The unsettled state of India had now rendered it incumbent on every man to guard his own possessions by the strength of his arm. The English Government could annul the rights of a trading company that depended on nothing but trade; it could hardly confiscate the property of a corporation whose possessions were situated on the other side of the world. But the East India Company soon resumed its old attitude of dislike

towards any territorial acquisitions made by too zealous servants.

The value of the stations which it already possessed had been proved, and the course of events had made the Company owners of territories other than these. The island of St. Helena in mid-Atlantic was used as a port of call for its vessels ; [1] and in India itself the Company had made further advances. Fort St. George was erected in the year 1639 at Madraspatam, or Madras as it appears in the English abbreviation. Four years later it became a Presidency.

Towards the end of the Commonwealth, when a period of misfortune menaced the Company, it was decided to relinquish the out-stations, concentrating all business in Surat and Madras ; and at the Restoration, when Charles II. offered the directors the isle of Bombay, which was part of the marriage portion he had received from Portugal, it was refused. To the king, however, that place was more trouble than it was worth, and in 1668 the Company took it over, ' to be held in free and common soccage, as of the manor of East Greenwich, on the payment of the annual rental of £10 in gold, on the 30 September in each year.'

In 1687 Bombay was erected into a regency, with unlimited power over all the other English settlements in India ; at the same time Madras became a corporation, equipped with the mayor and civic officials dear to the citizen's heart.

Already, too, on 20th December 1686, the agent and council of the Company had left the old factory at Hugli, and come to Sutanati, where, after some diplomatic fencing with the Mughal Emperor, three towns were granted to the English, among which was Calcutta. As Fort William, it became a Presidency in 1700.

The nucleus of each of the three great Indian dependencies therefore already belonged to the East India Company a

[1] For St. Helena see book viii. chap. v.

hundred years after the merchants of London had embarked on the ' pretended voyage ' to the Orient.

Thus, at the close of a century of generally prosperous connection with Asia, England, as represented by the East India Company, was in an anomalous position. A mercantile corporation had begun to acquire powers hardly suited to its original character ; but as yet the anomaly was scarcely very evident. At any rate, there was absolutely no indication that it would eventually extirpate all its rivals in the East.

Still less could the wildest dreamer have imagined that another hundred years would see the subjugation of the greater part of India by a body of foreign merchants. Any one in the reign of Queen Anne who had prophesied half so great a future for the Company would have been quite justifiably detained in Bedlam. Yet the prophecy would have been no less than the truth.

CHAPTER IV

THE STRUGGLE FOR INDIA : 1700-57[1]

The riches of the Indies had become a proverb in Europe during the seventeenth century. The wealth of those who engaged in the Indian trade was obvious to all ; the mystery which surrounded the country made its fascination greater. And as it became slowly evident that Asiatic commerce meant also Asiatic conquest, the competition between different nations became sharper, and the means employed among their agents grew more dubious. We have noticed the growing settlements of the English East India Company in the Orient during the seventeenth century : but the decay

[1] Authorities.—As before, with Macaulay's *Essay on Clive* and the biography of him by Malcolm. Also Malleson's *History of the French in India.*

of Portugal and the rise of Holland came about during the same epoch; and the Danes and the Scots endeavoured to obtain a share of the traffic, while the French entered with zest into the promotion of new interests in India. The first half of the eighteenth century is the history of a general and decisive struggle between all these powers.

After the decline of the Portuguese in the East it was a Frenchman who first conceived the magnificent idea of bringing India as a whole under occidental rule. The prize was not for his nation; but it was no fault of the Gallic pioneers in Asia that the tiger and the elephant were never quartered with the pure white lilies on the Bourbon shield. It was a Frenchman who first saw that the disruption of the ancient kingdoms of India was full of possibilities for the ambitious European. The Western invasion of the East came in fact just at the time when the old order of things was passing away.

The invasion of Timur had long since swept through India, by which the 'streets of Delhi were rendered impassable by heaps of dead.' Other invaders had come and gone as he. The Musalmán invasion had founded a powerful dynasty, and introduced a new population in India, whose pride it was that they alone possessed the true faith and the key to the gates of Paradise. The Mohammedans were aliens in the country they had conquered, and they boasted of it. But in time their empire also broke up into separate kingdoms; and at the period when Europeans were first settling in the East a new synthesis of the Indian peoples was forcibly evolved by Akbar the Great, the real founder of the Mughal power. The states that had become independent were reduced, whether Hindu, Rajput, or Musalmán, by a series of wars and alliances; the Indian Empire, which at his accession was confined to the Punjab and the districts round Agra and Delhi, in a few years extended from the heart of Afghánistán southwards to

Indian Anarchy.

Orissa and Sind; only the South successfully defied Akbar still.

The magnificence of the Mughal Empire astounded Sir Thomas Roe when he arrived at its capital of Delhi early in the seventeenth century. Akbar, its sovereign, was not only a great soldier; he was equally great as an administrator. A new system of government and revenue was introduced, whereof the latter continues in part to this day. Reforms were everywhere undertaken: the inhuman rites and customs of the Hindus were put down; animal sacrifices, child-marriage, and trial by ordeal were abolished; widow-burning was discouraged, although it could not be stamped out.

The Mughal Empire.

In the Emperor's court there was a wise toleration. Akbar loved to gather round him professors of all the creeds; and Jew, Christian, Musalmán, Parsi, or sceptic each stated their belief, debating points of doctrine openly with one another. From their discussions Akbar himself evolved a new eclectic religion, which found as much acceptance as such schemes always do.

It was an era of the most exquisite taste in the fine arts: Akbar and his successors enriched Delhi and Agra with the purest gems of Indian architecture. The Taj Mahal is but the most perfect of a series of beautiful creations that have been unparalleled in oriental history.

The Mughal Empire, in short, was the most imposing, as it was perhaps the best, that India had yet known. Yet with all its splendour, that Empire was but as a house that is built on the sand. The death of its founder shook it severely; the dissensions of his successors wrecked it altogether. The sons of Akbar rebelled against him and quarrelled among themselves; Aurungzeb, the last great native monarch of India, marched to the throne through a sea of blood after deposing his father and murdering his brothers.

Its Decline and Fall.

He extended the authority of the Mughals into provinces that had never before acknowledged them. He subjugated much of Southern India, and proudly styled himself the 'conqueror of the universe.' His court was as brilliant and magnificent as that of Akbar.

But corruption had eaten it through and through. The unending wars that had been necessary to his victories had in the long-run only enfeebled the army. The chief power of the South still defied him at his death in 1707. The tributary princes had always girded at his authority. The foundations of the Empire had altogether decayed, and the end of his reign of forty-eight years was the signal for a period of disastrous anarchy to begin in India, from which it was only rescued when the British became supreme.

All through his reign the power of his rivals, the Marathas, had been increasing; and when he spoke his last words,—'Come what may, I have launched my vessel on the waves; farewell! farewell! farewell!'—they had already become a formidable confederacy, which proved able to withstand for over a century the continued onslaughts of the British.

The break-up of the Mughal Empire was now quick, complete, and absolute. There was again a contest for the succession. Three sovereigns in a few years were boys and mere puppets. Others were deposed and murdered. The Deccan declared its independence, Haidarábád broke away from the nominal control to which it had been subjected. The Punjab, one of the oldest provinces, was lost long before it finally forced itself free in 1751.

The Mughal Empire continued indeed to exist for many years more. But it existed only in name, and the last occupants of the throne of Delhi were pensioners of the English, living lives of effeminate sloth and luxury in the seclusion of their palaces, protected indeed from harm or the resentment of their subjects, but powerless to influence by one act or word the destinies of that vast country which

their ancestors had gloriously conquered, and had frequently ruled with wisdom.

Meanwhile India was devastated by invasions, and she was unable to repel them. The Sikhs alone were defeated; but the cruelties that were inflicted on them remained burned into the memory of that warrior race for ever. Their leader was carried about in an iron cage, robed in mockery as an emperor with scarlet turban and cloth of gold. His son's heart was torn out before his eyes, and thrown in his face. He himself was pulled to pieces with red-hot pincers, and his followers were exterminated as though they had been dogs. But if in this case the enemy were defeated, the very victory was a disgrace to the people that won it, and a proof of the barbarity to which they had descended. A terrible retribution was to overtake them at the hands of others.

India Invaded.

In the year 1739 Nadir Shah invaded India from Persia; and when he captured Delhi there was a frightful massacre in its streets, while the devoted city was given over to a plunder that lasted fifty-eight days. After the army retired, sated with excess, it was estimated that the booty they carried with them was of the value of thirty-two millions sterling.

More terrible even than this were the invasions that followed from Afghánistán. Six times in rapid succession the savage tribes beyond the River Indus descended on India, ravaging and slaughtering whithersoever they went, slaying the dwellers in lonely hamlets as well as in wealthy towns; outraging the religious feelings of the Hindus by despoiling the shrines of the country; murdering the votaries who worshipped at the holy places; leaving ruin and despair around them on all sides. The border lands were swept bare of inhabitants, crops, and riches; the settlers fled to the hills, to the jungles, to any hiding-place that offered, preferring rather to share the lairs of wild beasts than to face certain

torture and death at the hands of the Afgháns. In this dread catastrophe vanished the last vestige of the Mughal power.

The English in India, 1708-45.

It seems almost a satire to say that few years in the history of the English East India Company had been quieter or more prosperous than those in which these awful events took place. From 1708, when the two authorised corporations which had struggled for the Anglo-Indian trade were amalgamated, until after 1745, when the great contest of the Europeans in India finally began, its records are practically devoid of interest. There was the frustration of a new project for an India Company in England in 1730. There was a gradual increase of sales in India until in the record year of 1744 they stood at nearly two millions sterling. A regular dividend of seven or eight per cent. was paid. An embassy was sent to the Mughal Emperor in 1715, which, having waited on him for two years, received various privileges, such as the right to purchase land and towns, and to pass goods through the imperial territories free of duty or inspection. A mission station was established at Madras in 1728. A dockyard was built at Bombay in 1736. An attack of the Marathas on Madras was repelled in 1741. In consequence, the forts of that settlement were enlarged and strengthened. Such were the commonplace matters that occupied the directors and servants of the East India Company while India itself was torn from end to end.

Other Europeans in India.

Other nations had come and gone, as the struggle for oriental trade became keener. The vast Asiatic empire of the Portuguese was already destroyed. They had been swept from the seas by the Dutch and the English. On land the perpetual attacks of the Dutch had reduced them to three wretched towns, Goa, Daman, and Diu, which contained nothing worth keeping, and which showed, in the words of Hunter, a mere

miserable chronicle of pride, poverty, and high-sounding titles. The Portuguese had ever been crusaders rather than settlers or traders; their cruelties caused them to be hated by the Hindus, while their business incapacity made them the laughing-stock of more commercial nations. There were few Portuguese of pure blood left in the East; and their descendants were the Eurasian half-castes who are now hardly distinguishable from the native Indian stock.[1]

The Dutch had since become the leading power throughout the East, although their diminishing weight in Europe made it less likely that they would remain so in the future. It was not till 1758 that the knell of their existence on the Asiatic mainland was sounded by the English capturing the Dutch settlement at Chinsurah; but Holland still retained, and even extended, her power in the East Indian islands. The Danes formed an East India Company in 1612, and another in 1670: but beyond founding a few small trading stations they did nothing in the East. The same causes that prevented Scandinavian development in America prevented it also in India.[2] The merchants of Ostend, under the protection of the Emperor of Austria, had also formed an East India Company in 1723; but after a few years' commercial operations, it also perished. The Scots, too, had tried to compete in the race for oriental trade, but the company promoted by them in 1695 was a failure from its birth. Not a single Scottish enterprise that was projected overseas before the union with England had any measure of success whatever, whether directed towards Nova Scotia, Panama, or India.

But by far the most brilliant and successful of the European

[1] The Portuguese seem to have had no idea that miscegenation might have an evil effect on the dominant race. They allied themselves freely with the natives in India and South America, while Livingstone observed the same thing as a regular custom in South Africa. There is undoubtedly a strong alien strain in the blood of very many Portuguese families in Portugal at the present day.

[2] See vol. i. book iii. chap. iv.

powers in the East at this time was France, and the history of the efforts made by a few great men of that nation to found a French Empire in India has a tragic interest of its own.

The early years of their connection with Asia contained nothing remarkable. The first French expedition thither was fitted out in 1503 by some Rouen merchants; it sailed for the East, but nothing more was heard of it. A century passed; and in 1604 the first French East India Company was formed. It also came to nothing. The second, in 1611, showed better results; the third, inaugurated by Richelieu in 1642, endeavoured to found a colony in Madagascar, and having failed in that, ceased operations. The next Company was formed in 1664: it was encouraged by the king, who declared that oriental trade was not derogatory even to the nobility; settlements were made in the islands of Mauritius and Bourbon, and in 1668 the first factory was established at Surat.

The French in India, 1503-1748.

But for years the Company was almost uniformly unfortunate. Surat had to be abandoned. Pondicherri, which, founded in 1674, became the French headquarters in Asia, was taken by the Dutch in 1693. Even when the place was restored four years later, trade continued to languish. The Company quickly lost half its capital, and had not yet declared a dividend. It possessed neither ships nor money. The directors were forced to lease the right of making oriental voyages to the merchants of St. Malo. The rent of the Indian stations was frequently in arrear. The salaries due to the Company's servants were irregularly paid.

In 1719, indeed, relief seemed at hand. The French East India Company was amalgamated with those trading to China and Senegal; and under the guidance of Law, a young Scottish adventurer who endeavoured to restore order to the French national exchequer, the shares jumped to a premium. As great a rage for speculation suddenly sprang up in France as during the South Sea Bubble the next year in England.

The merchants almost worshipped Law; the nobility ran after him. 'A duchess kisses his hand,' reported the scandal-mongers of the day, 'how then will other women kiss him?'

But in a few months the entire project collapsed, and the Company was left in a worse position than before. It was now that the one man who might have secured India for France appeared. Joseph François Dupleix was appointed, through the influence of his father, first councillor at Pondicherri in 1720. From the moment of arrival his energetic nature infused fresh life into that unprosperous settlement. He stimulated the commerce of the Company, and by indulging in private trade on his own account, laid the foundations of the splendid fortune which within a few years was dissipated in too faithful service to his country's interests in Asia. The English merchants at the neighbouring station of Madras were wealthy but unenterprising; and Dupleix saw at once that Pondicherri might be made the emporium of the whole south of India. His exertions were fast succeeding when in 1726 the directors ordered his recall on a point of detail. He refused to return, and after four years of incessant wrangling his appeal was allowed. Appointed intendant of Chandanagore, he again found a miserable and stagnant French settlement a few miles from Calcutta, where the English trade was increasing every year. Again his spirit revolted against the poverty of his compatriots in the East. He embarked his private means, already great, in bringing trade to Chandanagore. He attracted the native merchants away from the rival European stations on the Hugli, and in four years the quays of the deserted settlement were teeming with goods; a fleet of some forty vessels was soon regularly employed in the French trade; relations were opened up with the interior, and even with Tibet. In 1741 Dupleix was promoted to be Governor of Pondicherri. He was now supreme in the French Indies.

Dupleix, 1730.

At exactly what time he began to evolve those schemes of conquest which so nearly gave the Empire of India to France instead of England cannot be decided. As a boy he had been of a speculative turn of mind, loathing commerce, but delighting to indulge in day-dreams of all sorts. To cure him, a prudent father had sent him to sea, and he returned apparently ready to become a good man of business. Such, indeed, he was; but there is little doubt that the old speculative spirit had only been strengthened by what he had seen on his eastern voyage. In any case, even if it lay dormant during his early years in India, his imagination was at length fired by the magnificence of the opportunity which, with further knowledge, he saw presented itself to a resolute man of action.

India was given over to anarchy. It might be ruined by the feuds of the native princes. It might, on the other hand, be conquered by any one of them who was strong enough to impose his will on the rest. But it was evident that the superiority of the European over the strongest native was at least as great as that of the strongest native over the weakest. A few thousand Europeans, possessed of European military appliances and training, might have conquered the immense armies and clumsy artillery even of the greatest Asiatic princes. They could certainly rout most of the petty chiefs with ease. By a judicious system of alliances, they could disarm the hostility of perhaps half India until it was too late to resist. Certainly no Western power had as yet succeeded in such a project. But the directors of the French East India Company at home could not be expected to realise its possibility; and those Europeans who had been in India hitherto were only stolid and somewhat stupid traders like the English and the Dutch, or hot-headed knights-errant like the Portuguese. In any event, they were not strong enough in the seventeenth century, even had the Mughal power at that time not been in its prime, and even had the idea entered their heads.

But in the eighteenth century France was the greatest military power in the world. And her diplomacy had secured her victories as splendid as those which had been won by her arms. There was no ambitious project in which she might not hope for success. All the vast and magnificent countries of India lay within her grasp. The other traders from the West could be easily expelled ; or they might, with contemptuous pity, be allowed to remain as simple merchants. The French authority, once secure, could be exercised either openly or secretly ; the French Governor-General might, if he chose, be Emperor of India in fact as well as in name ; or he might, with all the essentials of command, still find it convenient to yield a nominal allegiance as vassal to the puppet he had set up on the throne.

Such, in substance, must have been the thoughts of Dupleix as supreme governor of the French Indies. Certain advantages he had already. He was possessed of a profound knowledge of Indian native character, its love for panoply and display, its reverence for exterior form, its submission before authority. Able men had preceded him : for although the directors of the French East India Company had been inefficient and inept to a degree, they had been served far better than they merited.

The same thing, in fact, was taking place in India as in Canada. In the latter country the pioneers of France, scarcely assisted at all by the home authorities, were carrying the name and influence of their country far into the great West. In India a series of wise governors, likewise unaided from Paris, often indeed acting directly contrary to the pusillanimous orders sent out from the capital, were establishing close and cordial relations with the natives. In the East as in the West, the French were the only European nation that realised the importance of a good understanding with the aboriginal inhabitants. The Portuguese tried to convert by force all whom they found ; the Dutch tyrannised everywhere they could ;

the English kept aloof from everything but commerce. The French, on the other hand, whenever it was possible always treated the natives as friends, as allies, as equals.

It is true that neither in Canada nor India did they possess any real stability. They placed government before trade, the shadow before the substance; and in the end they lost both. But the faults of their administration, grave as they were, might have been overcome, had it not been for the fatal corruption and neglect that prevailed in France. It is true that their rulers overseas, great as they were, all showed the same defect, in being jealous of each other, and in allowing the heart-burnings inevitable in every community to result in a lack of subordination and co-operation for the general good of the whole. That also need not necessarily have ruined them. It was the combination of both causes that reduced the French, from the nucleus of a splendid empire both in America and Asia, to a few wretched islands in the one, and an insignificant township in the other.

When Dupleix was appointed Governor of Pondicherri, the French were already practically the masters of the south Coromandel coast, and their influence extended far into the Karnatic. He quickly put the older settlement in order, and returned to Chandanagore, to be installed there as Nawab of that place. Returning to Pondicherri, he used his new title as a means of overawing the neighbouring chieftains; his magnificence dazzled them, and he was soon recognised as sovereign of the South.

But the clouds of approaching war were now gathering with England in Europe; and war with England in Europe meant also war with England in Asia. Yet the directors of the French East India Company wrote that expenses must be reduced by at least one half, and that all outlay on buildings and fortifications must be stopped. To obey would have been to leave Pondicherri defenceless and open to the first attack of the English. The order, however, was explicit, and in any event

communication with Europe was too slow to get it countermanded in time, if indeed the timorous directors had dared to do so. Dupleix, therefore, at once undertook to pay for the entire fortification of the place out of his own pocket; at the same time economising within the settlement as much as possible by reducing salaries, and putting down those few abuses which still remained. The directors were glad to see their work done at the expense of another, although it involved disobedience to their orders; they sent word that they were 'very much pleased' with their governor in the East: a compliment which doubtless was still a source of gratification to Dupleix when their stupidity a few years later ruined both themselves and him.

But war had by now broken out, and he was left to defend Pondicherri with but 436 men in the garrison, one small war-ship, the great defensive works yet unfinished, and no prospect of further succour from Europe. An appeal was made to the British at Madras to exclude Asia from the sphere of hostilities; but they would have none of it. The two nations had certainly traded side by side for over half a century without a collision; but the British had seen with alarm the rising star of Dupleix, and though they had formed no definite plans of resistance, they knew that one of their naval squadrons was sailing for the East, and was even now destroying French commerce on the way.

War between England and France, 1744.

Dupleix had foreseen the refusal, and he at once prepared to obtain assistance from the native chiefs. Appeal was also made to Labourdonnais, Governor of the French colony at Bourbon. Here again the French administration at Paris displayed its incapacity. Still believing that the war would be confined to Europe, it had refused the latter permission to send his forces to India, and rendered it impossible by recalling his fleet. In some respects a man of the same temperament as Dupleix, he disobeyed; and, having improvised a

fleet of his own by commandeering every foreign vessel that put in at Bourbon, he set sail for India with his small garrison. After being nearly wrecked by the monsoon, he arrived off Pondicherri, drove away the English squadron which was about to attack that place, and saved the capital of the French Orient.

Only one policy was now possible. Either the English must drive the French out of Pondicherri, or the French must drive the English out of Madras; and both Dupleix and Labourdonnais were determined that it should be the latter. Dupleix thought it 'very easy' to do so; and he was probably well informed as to the weakness of the English position in Madras, where Fort St. George was in no condition to resist him, the whole garrison consisting only of 300 men, of whom 34 were Portuguese or negroes, and 70 more were unfit for duty; while the officers were three lieutenants, of whom two were foreigners, and seven ensigns who had risen from the ranks.

Labourdonnais was equally anxious to capture the place; but the fear that the British fleet he had recently dispersed would return and take him at a disadvantage made him hesitate. He had, as it proved, no reason to fear; but the tradition of our success at sea here stood us in good stead, as it has so often done elsewhere.

Eventually Madras was besieged on 15th September 1746; and after six days it 'surrendered with precipitation,' to quote from the letter in which Labourdonnais announced the capitulation to Dupleix. The latter rightly wished to press the advantage to the uttermost, by at once attacking the other English stations in India, and expelling his rivals altogether; but a host of difficulties now arose. Labourdonnais was jealous of the authority of Dupleix, and would obey neither appeals nor commands; he had already listened to the suggestions of a ransom, and he fell before the offer of a bribe from the English

The Loss of Madras.

Governor of Madras. With insane treachery, he agreed to restore the city.

Dupleix was furious, but he could do nothing, for he was involved in a dispute with the local Nawab from whom both Pondicherri and Madras were leased. That prince had restrained the English from attacking the French two years before; on an appeal from Madras, he had half-promised to protect the English against their enemies: and nothing would appease him for the violation of the neutrality which all Europeans were supposed to preserve in foreign lands.

In this perplexity, Dupleix, ready to do anything rather than restore Madras to the English, assured the Nawab that it had been conquered in order to present it to him. Still suspicious at such unwonted generosity, the native ruler waited on events; but seeing the French flag continue to fly over Madras, as Labourdonnais haggled about ransom and a personal bribe, he at last refused to believe, and came to the conclusion that he had been doubly duped.

Another disaster now ensued. The French fleet was driven out to sea and wrecked by the monsoon; while with the few shattered vessels that alone were rescued Labourdonnais returned to Bourbon.

It is probable that Dupleix did not regret the loss of so sorry an auxiliary: but with him he lost likewise all those reinforcements to whom he owed not only the capture of Madras, but also the defence of Pondicherri against the British fleet. And at the same time, more ill news arrived. Despatches from Europe announced that war with Holland was imminent; the Dutch therefore would soon be added to the number of his foes. The patience of the Nawab, too, was exhausted, and he marched to attack the French, who were still in Madras.

A painful dilemma now confronted Dupleix. Should he restore the city to the English, or resign it to the Indian? The latter course was preferable, but there was still another

alternative, and on that Dupleix decided. He determined to repudiate the arrangement which Labourdonnais had made with the English, and so dismiss them from India, thus keeping Madras in his own hands, while risking a rupture with the Nawab.

So far as the native prince was concerned, the matter was quickly settled. The French and Indian troops came into conflict on 4th November 1746; but after a few rounds of artillery had been fired the natives fled in confusion. From that day the Nawab submitted to Dupleix, and not Dupleix to the Nawab. Never before in modern times had the superiority of European over Asiatic troops been so plainly demonstrated; since then it has seldom been questioned in India.

The battle, which took place at St. Thomé before Madras, relieved Dupleix of his more pressing anxieties: he proclaimed Madras a French possession by right of conquest; and the English, protesting loudly at the breach of faith, were forced to abandon the Presidency.

It was certainly unfortunate for our people that the bribe accepted by Labourdonnais had been wasted to no purpose; but Dupleix could not be expected to recognise the corrupt bargain of a subordinate at a critical stage in the struggle for India. Himself the soul of honour in his dealings with Europeans—he followed, as did everybody in that age, a different course when negotiating with Asiatics—he was not bound to compromise France because one of her sons had failed her in the hour of need. The English prisoners were marched to Pondicherri, and thence they were to be sent to Europe; but some escaped to Fort St. David, an English possession south of the French capital, and at that time our sole remaining station on the Coromandel coast.

Dupleix, determined to be supreme in that part of India, decided to drive us from our last refuge. Had he acted at once, victory should not have been difficult. Our garrison was 300 men, with 1000 native irregulars. The alliance to

which we had agreed with the Nawab since his rupture with the French was not of much value. There were no signs of succour by sea, except for some twenty men landed by a passing merchant vessel. Our people, too, were depressed by their late losses and lack of success, and awed by the conspicuous greatness of Dupleix.

But there was one vulnerable point in the French Governor's armour, and that the Nawab discovered by accident. He was an administrator, a politician, a merchant, a ruler; but he was not a soldier. He was forced to rely for his victories on the fragments of an army which he possessed: and when he wished to entrust the attack on Fort St. David to Paradis, the young officer who had routed the Nawab at St. Thomé, the whole service protested at the disregard of the rules of seniority. A further argument was found in the fact that Paradis was a Swiss; and Dupleix gave way for the moment. The command was given to an old and incompetent general, who allowed himself to be attacked unexpectedly and defeated by the Nawab at the outset of the campaign.

Angry at the loss, Dupleix appealed to the patriotism of the army, and Paradis was at last appointed to lead. But meanwhile over two months had been lost, and in that time the defences of Fort St. George had been strengthened. In better condition to resist the enemy, fortune seemed also to turn in our favour. At the moment that the fort was attacked an English squadron arrived from Calcutta, and the French were repulsed.

It was now the turn of Pondicherri to be on the defensive. Once again the advantage given by sea-power was proved, for Dupleix was unable to prosecute his schemes further: indeed, had it not been for his energy and ability, and a knowledge of defence which he attributed chiefly to his early love of mathematics, it is probable that the French Empire in India would have fallen there and then. Judging from the unskilful, dilatory, and jejune tactics which the majority of his countrymen

displayed during the next few critical years, it seems certain that the days of Pondicherri under French rule would have been few without the inspiring presence of Dupleix. As it was, the English were repulsed, and retired in dejection. It appeared hopeless to fight against the genius of this man.

It was now the end of the year 1748. The war had dragged out its weary length in Europe, devoid of interest or important consequences. Every nation was sick of a struggle that led nowhere, and the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle brought about a peace that was in fact only a temporary truce. A mutual restitution of conquests was agreed upon; and Cape Breton, an island that the British Government considered of little importance, on one side of the world, was exchanged for Madras, potentially at least of enormous value, on the other. The whole work of Dupleix was thus cancelled at a stroke; but, at least, he had the supreme pleasure of being complimented by his employers for the services he had rendered. 'If,' said the directors of the French East India Company, 'all his other achievements merited the thanks of the France he had served so well, his last crowning success of saving Pondicherri placed him beyond the reach of ordinary applause.'

The Peace of 1748.

With peace secured, it was hoped by both the English and French East India Companies that unaggressive trade in Asia would continue as of old. Little did they know their servants in the East; little did they realise the conditions prevailing there. As in America, so it was during these years in India: there was not room for the two nations to exist together.

The next three years were those in which the power of France was at its zenith in India. The brilliant victories of Bussy in the Deccan consolidated French influence in the interior. The vigorous policy of Dupleix at Pondicherri gave France the empire of the whole South. His puppet was placed on the throne of the Karnatic. His authority was soon supreme over thirty-

The Zenith of French Power, 1748-51.

five millions of natives. The city of Dupleix-futtah-ábád—the City of the Victory of Dupleix—began to rise, as a memorial of his past actions, and as a menace to those who might venture to oppose him in the future.

Meanwhile the English were dispirited and unsuccessful. They, too, attempted to form political alliances with the natives, and endeavoured to imitate Dupleix in setting up their own candidates on Indian thrones; but it was to no purpose. They did not yet understand the game which they afterwards played with such consummate skill.

Through the genius of one man, the French seemed thus about to sweep all before them in India. Yet the decline of their power was at hand; and its decline was as rapid as its rise. No more help arrived from France, since the French East India Company could not see the need of any. Practically all the expenses of the forward policy in India were paid out of the private purse of Dupleix. The one act of assistance to which the directors condescended went astray; a vessel containing reinforcements of 700 men was burnt at sea. The Company became more and more distrustful of its energetic representative in the East, for he was forsaking the peaceful pursuits of trade for the dangers of empire: instead of concentrating all his attention on the buying of silks and spices, he was straying into schemes that a Cæsar or an Alexander might devise. As he paid for his vagaries himself, the directors had patience yet a little while; but they were suspicious of him, as only the ignorant and stupid can be of the far-seeing and wise, for years before his ultimate recall and final betrayal.

India was at this time the land of meteoric careers, as America and South Africa became at a later day; but the star that was now rising in the East was not French. Robert Clive was the son of a small English landowner near Market Drayton in Shropshire. Born on 29th September 1725, he was in his earlier years far from a

Clive, 1725-74.

favourite of fortune. Passionate and wayward in his youth, looked on as a booby by his father, but as a plague by the local townspeople, from whom he levied a tribute of halfpence in consideration of not breaking their windows, lazy in school and a scapegrace out of it, young Clive seemed destined to become a ne'er-do-weel. 'Fighting,' said an uncle, 'to which he is out of measure addicted, gives his temper such a fierceness and imperiousness, that he flies out on every trifling occasion'; and soon he was renowned as the daredevil of the county. Once he climbed to the top of the lofty steeple of Market Drayton Church, and seated himself on the stone spout near the summit, to the terror of the onlookers.

There was nothing to be done at home with such a boy; and his family gladly accepted a writership for him in the service of the East India Company. He arrived at Madras in 1743; but his first months in the East were uniformly miserable. 'I have not enjoyed,' he wrote, 'one happy day since I left my native country. . . . I must confess when I think of my dear native England, it affects me in a very particular manner . . . if I should be so far blest as to revisit again my own country, but more especially Manchester, the centre of all my wishes, all that I could hope or desire for would be presented before me in one view.'

Nor was Clive reconciled to exile after the first attack of home-sickness had spent its force. He had no friends, and was too proud to make the first advances to anybody. The few people he knew were card-room acquaintances, and with them he was always quarrelling and duelling. Twice he tried to shoot himself, and it was only when the pistol would not fire that he threw it away, swearing that after all he was reserved for something great.

But as a clerk in the Company's office at Madras he would assuredly not have accomplished much. Had he been compelled to remain a trader, he might have thrown up his berth in disgust—several times he nearly did so—or committed

suicide; or he might, after some years of discontent and chafing against routine, have settled down into the usual type of eighteenth-century Anglo-Indian, occupied with petty commercial details, and enriching himself privately in the intervals of attending to the Company's business. Of the two, the former seems the more likely.

But fortunately for Clive, his lot was cast in more stirring times. Madras, the station at which he was employed, was taken by Labourdonnais; and he, with many others of the colony, escaped to Fort St. David. The opportunity had almost come; Clive asked and obtained his commission as ensign in the army of the Company. But the conclusion of peace found him back at his desk; again he left it to assist in quelling some native disturbances; again he returned to business. By now, however, the French were extending their Empire throughout India. The Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle only enlarged the scope of their operations. Both the ambition of Dupleix and the ability of Bussy were fully recognised at Madras; but timid counsels prevailed when measures of reprisal were suggested. Hitherto the British had remained feebly on the defensive, setting their native puppet against the French native puppet, giving him honour as the French gave honour, calling him monarch of Southern India as the French called theirs also. But the man whom the British had chosen to recognise as such had by now no authority beyond Trichinopoli, and it seemed improbable that he would possess even that for long, whereas the French nominee was saluted everywhere else as rightful ruler.

The Capture of Arcot, 1751.

Clive saw that a sudden and daring blow was necessary, if his countrymen were not to lose all power in the East; and, as captain and commissary to the troops, he determined to carry the war into the enemy's country by attacking Arcot. At the head of 200 English and 300 natives, he marched through wild storms to that fortress; the garrison, taken by

surprise, evacuated it without a blow. This, however, was little; Clive knew that he would have to undergo a siege, as soon as the news reached the French or Chunda Sahib, their Indian ally.

Such preparations as were possible he made; but an army of 10,000 Indians, backed by 150 French, was soon upon him. Arcot was in no good condition to resist. The walls were in ruins, the ditches were dry, the ramparts too small to carry guns, the battlements too low to protect the soldiers. Provisions were scanty. Casualties had thinned the garrison; its total number was but 120 Europeans and 200 sepoys. Its commander was only twenty-five years old, and he had had no military education.

But Clive, in the phrase of Pitt, was 'a heaven-born general.' He was able to inspire confidence and unity among his men, albeit they were of different races and creeds; an anecdote that has been preserved of the siege shows better than any description of their hardships in what spirit they fought. The sepoys came to Clive, not in order to complain of their scanty rations, but to suggest that all the grain in the place should be given to the Europeans, who required more nourishment than Asiatics. The thin gruel, they said, which was strained away from the rice, would be enough for themselves. Of such stuff are victories fashioned.

The son of Chunda Sahib, who was conducting the attack, learned that a body of Marathas, half-soldiers, half-robbers, had been hired to march to the relief of Arcot. He negotiated; he offered bribes, which were scornfully rejected; he threatened to storm the fort, and to put every man within it to the sword. Clive answered coolly that his father was a usurper, that his army was a rabble, and that he had better think twice before he sent cowards to attack a breach defended by English soldiers.

Stung to fury, the young Indian determined to storm the fort. Elephants whose foreheads were armed with iron plates

were put in the van ; and against a native army they might have availed. But European musketry forced them back in terror, and they trampled on the army behind. In spite of this misfortune, valiant efforts were made to carry a breach in the walls. But after three onslaughts, it was given up ; and night fell, leaving the defenders anxiously expecting another attack. Next morning, however, the assailants had decamped, and the first great English victory in India was won.

The authorities at Madras were overjoyed, as well they might be. Further successes followed ; the ' City of the Victory of Dupleix ' was rased to the ground, and the monument which commemorated those victories destroyed.

The spell of French success was thus broken ; and Dupleix, though he struggled valiantly against misfortune, though he was never greater than now, when he was playing a losing game, was yet a beaten man from the day that Clive took Arcot. That day sounded the knell of French Asiatic power : it saw the beginning of the present British Empire of India.

The story of the decline of France is quickly told ; its pathos will move men of every nation, as we follow to their last sad end the lives of Labourdonnais, Dupleix, Bussy, and Lally.

The Fall of French Oriental Power.

The French East India Company longed above all things for peace in the East, not realising that peace could only come when they or the English had been expelled : and to the maintenance of peace all their ends were directed. So anxiously did they desire it, indeed, that they took counsel of their rivals in London, the English East India Company. The reply from Leadenhall Street naturally attributed all the evils of strife to Dupleix. It sounds incredible, but this decided the French on his recall. On 2nd August 1754, the order to return arrived at Pondicherri ; ten weeks later he sailed for Europe, being followed sorrowfully to the place of embarkation by the whole French colony. His fortune was gone, for the new

Governor of the French Indies dishonestly refused to recognise the enormous sums owing to Dupleix by the Company. Nor did he or his family ever receive any satisfaction from his late employers in Europe. He was at first welcomed cordially enough at Paris, since it was thought he might be useful: but soon he was neglected, and allowed to languish in great poverty; and thus he lingered nine years until his death in broken-hearted despair, his misery a standing reproach for all time to the ingratitude of the last corrupt period of the French monarchy. The final words he wrote, composed three days before he died on 10th November 1764, reflect poignantly the bitterness of his spirit. 'I have sacrificed,' he declared, 'my youth, my fortune, my life, to enrich my nation in Asia. Unfortunate friends, too weak relations, devoted all their property to the success of my projects. They are now in misery and want. I have submitted to all the judiciary forms. I have demanded, as the last of the creditors, that which is due to me. My services are treated as fables. My request is denounced as ridiculous. I am used as the vilest of mankind. I am in the most deplorable indigence; the little property that remained to me has been seized. I am compelled to ask for decrees for delay in order not to be cast into prison.'

The end of Labourdonnais was as tragic. Recalled after his failure in India, he was thrown into the Bastille; not indeed for his failure, but rather because he had rendered brilliant services to his country in Bourbon. He was eventually released; but the cruel confinement had undermined his health and broken his spirit, and he died shortly afterwards, in 1753.

Bussy returned after some years to India; but, being without support, he was naturally without success; and he too died with neither wealth nor reputation. Lally, the last of the great Frenchmen in the East, who defended Pondicherri in its declining years against the final assaults of the

English, was also condemned to death on his return home, and executed in 1766.

There were no others, nor could there be. There is a limit beyond which men cannot sacrifice themselves for their country. That limit is evidently not reached when simple ingratitude and neglect is the reward of their life-work, or the Empire of England would not have been standing to-day; for few of those who built it have had their labours recognised before their death, and not all have had them recognised after. But when neglect passes into malignance, when reproaches are added to ingratitude, when confiscation of personal property, imprisonment, and execution are added to these: then indeed is the nation that can so reward its heroes in danger of losing all that they have gained for it. The supply of empire-builders is not unlimited, and they cannot be produced at will; when steps are designedly taken to exterminate them, as was the case in France in the eighteenth century, it may safely be predicted that neither they nor the empire will long survive.

Pondicherri was taken from France on 1st January 1761; and although it was restored at the Peace of Paris two years later, it never rose again to the same height as under Dupleix. The great Governor of the French in India had against him, in the words of one of the national historians, 'that crime of genius which so many have expiated by misery, by exile, and by death'; and when it had thrown away its most brilliant servant, the French East India Company could not long continue to exist. It was dissolved in 1769. Through ignorance and incapacity it had lost an empire.

Further English Successes in Southern India.

But the path of Clive after the victory of Arcot was far from clear. The other English residents in India, though pleased at his success, were unable to follow it up. Not until his old chief, Major Lawrence, arrived again from home was much progress made. Clive might have retained the command

had he chosen; but with rare tact and discretion, he resigned it to the older officer. The two worked well together; each appreciated the other's abilities; and one of the most pleasing episodes in the life of Clive was the delicacy with which, when flushed with triumph, and the directors of the Company presented him with a sword set in diamonds, he refused to accept it unless a similar compliment was paid to his old commander.

Everywhere the two now conquered. The southern coasts of India, from being practically a French possession, became English. But Clive had by this time been nearly ten years in the East; and after one last victorious expedition against two French forts, in which he commanded an army that he had first had to train, an army composed of 500 raw sepoys and 200 recruits seized from the hells of London, an army which ran away whenever a soldier was killed, and one of whose number took refuge for hours at the bottom of a well when a gun burst: after this exploit, his health compelled him to return to England.

But with his departure from the scene of action things soon relapsed into their former state. The merchants of Madras were satisfied to be nothing more than merchants; the military went to sleep; diplomatic relations with the native courts were neglected altogether.

It was at Calcutta, however, that the next danger to the East India Company arose. At that settlement—it was hardly yet worthy the name of town—our merchants had never intended to be anything but commercial men. Their most warlike occupation had been to cut prices and to kill competition. They had had no conflicts with natives or Europeans. They had no reason to suspect any menace to their existence. The neighbouring French settlement at Chandanagore now contained no restless Dupleix; and experience showed that such a man, had he existed, would have been recalled by France before he could do much damage to her enemies. The

Dutch were settled further up the Hugli at Chinsurah. Between them and the English had been waged many a bitter war for the right to trade; but those days were past, and both English and Dutch could hold their own at the peaceful business that now engrossed them. Nor did there appear to be any ground for fearing native hostility. The tribute agreed upon was paid punctually to the Nawab, and it formed a not inconsiderable part of his revenue. He would not, it seemed certain, be so foolish as to deprive himself of that.

But no Europeans save the French knew the workings of the native mind; and even the French would have been at fault with Suraja Dowlah. Succeeding his grandfather as Viceroy of Bengal in 1756, at the age of less than twenty years, he had hated the English from the first. It is not apparent what, if any, ground he had for his hatred; possibly it was simply a general feeling against all strangers of another race within his dominions, a phenomenon that has frequently been seen in others since his time. Be that as it may, he hated the English; and he was an autocrat. No native dared oppose his desires; no European understood what those desires were. He wished to expel the merchants of the East India Company; and to do so a quarrel was necessary. But pretexts for a rupture are never difficult when the rupture itself is decided on: and in this case one was found in the fact that, in expectation of another war with France, the English settlements had been fortified without special permission having been obtained from the Nawab. In addition to this, a rich native, hearing that the Nawab desired to plunder him, had taken refuge in Calcutta, and was not given up when demanded.

Suraja Dowlah.

The two pretexts sufficed. Suraja Dowlah marched with a large army against Fort William, Calcutta. The Governor fled. The military commander of the place followed a safe example, and fled likewise. Those who were left in the fort resisted feebly; but in a short time it was taken, and the

Nawab summoned the English prisoners of war before him in the chief hall of the East India Company's factory. He spoke abusively of their insolence, and grumbled at the small amount of treasure that was found. By a gracious afterthought, however, he promised to spare the lives of his captives, and retired to rest.

It was the 20th June 1756, the night which is immortalised in our history by the infamous memory of 'the Black Hole of Calcutta.' There were 146 prisoners, and they were in high spirits, for they had the word of a prince that their lives would be spared. It is true that Asiatic duplicity was a proverb, but nobody could believe that in such a matter the Viceroy of Bengal would deliver helpless prisoners to destruction. The captives were in charge of the Nawab's guards, and these determined to secure them during the night in the garrison prison, known by the awful name of the Black Hole.

The Black Hole of Calcutta, 1756.

It was only twenty feet square. Such ventilation as there was came through small and obstructed air-holes. At any time it would have been an uncomfortable confinement for one person. In any country it would have been unhealthy to have shut up many persons there for a single night. But in the middle of the summer, in a tropical country, to confine 146 persons, of various ages and of both sexes, in such a place, was not merely to commit murder in cold blood, but to commit it in as cruel a manner as was possible, and to the accompaniment of fiendish torture such as no mind not utterly vicious could have suggested to itself.

The guards ordered the prisoners to enter; and at first the English laughed at the absurdity of the idea. But it was soon found to be a command that was intended to be obeyed. The prisoners expostulated and entreated. It was without effect; the guards threatened to cut down all who hesitated, and drove their captives into the cell. The door was shut and locked.

Immediately the tightly-packed mass of humanity began to struggle, to scream, to fight for air. Vain attempts were made to burst the door, to bribe the gaolers. But it was as impossible to move the one as the other. The soldiers answered that nothing could be done without the Nawab's orders, that he was asleep, that he would be angry if anybody woke him.

The terror of the prisoners increased. They trampled on one another. They fought for places at the small gratings which served for windows, through which a little air came, and through which the guards with cruel mercy passed a little water to their captives.

They raved, they prayed, they blasphemed. Some asked the guards to fire among them, and so to end their sufferings. But the spectacle was too amusing for the gaolers to bring it unnecessarily to a close. They held lights to the bars of the Black Hole, and laughed at the fearful struggle within. . . .

Towards morning it became almost calm. The shouting gave way to low moans and gasps. From many there was no more sound at all. As the day broke, the Nawab roused himself, and gave orders that the door might be opened.

There were twenty-three survivors, of whom one was a woman. Weak and staggering, they could not find a way out among the corpses of their late companions. The soldiers had to pile up the dead on either side before the living could emerge. The corpses were already showing signs of decay; a pit was dug, and they were thrown in and covered up without ceremony.

The survivors were brought before the Nawab. There were some from whom nothing was to be got; these were allowed to depart without further injury. The woman was placed in a harem. But those whom the Nawab thought might have treasure concealed, the richer members of the English settlement whom it might be worth his while to plunder, were sent up country in irons, lodged in sheds, and fed only with grain and water till they should confess. It

was only the pleadings of Suraja Dowlah's womenfolk that procured their release.

The native guards were neither punished nor reprimanded. The Nawab was proud of his work and sent letters to the nominal Emperor at Delhi vaunting his glorious victory, in memory of which the name of Calcutta was to be changed to Alinagur, the Port of God. There can be no doubt that the whole massacre was directly ordered by him; and the wretched being, to whom cruelty for cruelty's sake was the spice of life, thought he had done well in extirpating the English from his dominions.

For a time there was no retribution; news travelled slowly in those days, and punitive expeditions were not easy to organise. But the Nawab soon began to feel the want of those whom he had expelled, for his revenues diminished rapidly. He was considering whether his dignity would allow the East India Company to return to its old station, when a different aspect of the affair was brought to his notice.

The news of the massacre reached Madras in August 1756. There was an instant cry for vengeance. It was no time for weighing justice with even hand; a deed so savage provoked feelings as savage among the English.

Fortunately Clive had just returned from Europe, and within forty-eight hours of the news of the Black Hole becoming known it was determined that an expedition led by him should be sent against Suraja Dowlah. In October it sailed; in December it anchored in the Hugli. The Nawab was at Murshidábád, more than a hundred miles further up the river. When he was told of the force that was coming against him, he laughed in derision. His ignorance was as great as his cruelty; and he, who refused to believe that there were ten thousand men in all Europe, scouted the idea that an enemy should dare to invade his dominions.

The Revenge.

But Clive quickly recovered Calcutta, routed the garri-

sons near, and stormed and sacked the neighbouring towns. The Nawab began to be perturbed; although he had an enormous army, and the whole force of his opponents was but 900 British infantry and 1500 sepoys, he offered to come to terms. He was prepared to restore the factory, and to give compensation for the injuries he had caused.

Negotiations were opened. It was proved a month or two later that the British troops were able to defeat those of Suraja Dowlah: but the agents of the East India Company, who had been expelled from Calcutta, were anxious to start business operations there again; and the news that war had broken out once more between England and France made the government of Madras anxious for the return of their army. Clive had hitherto been a soldier pure and simple; from what has been said of him it may be imagined that he had no talents as a diplomatist, and no inclination towards that profession; and he disliked the thought of treating with a murderer. But the reasons which induced him to treat instead of to fight were cogent; and his success was as great as a statesman as it had been as a commander. In the first instance he had little to do with the negotiations, which were carried on between Watts, a servant of the Company, and Omichund, a wealthy Bengali, the agent of the Nawab.

But Suraja Dowlah was as fickle as he was feeble. He advanced to threaten Calcutta; the moment he did so he regretted the step, fell back, and consented to make peace on whatever terms the English might lay down. Before these terms could be put in writing he intrigued with the French at Chandanagore, and invited them to drive the English out of Bengal. His treachery was known both to Clive and Watson, the admiral accompanying the expedition; and they at once determined on a bold stroke. They stormed and took Chandanagore, and all the property and persons of the chief French establishment in Bengal fell into their hands.

The Nawab was helpless; but he continued to vacillate.

Again he sent an abject submission, and a large sum as compensation. Immediately afterwards he asked the French leader, Bussy, to hasten from the Deccan to his protection.

His people were disgusted at his folly, and alarmed at the danger to which it exposed them. A plot was hatched to dethrone the miserable Viceroy of Bengal, and it was communicated to the committee that was now directing English affairs at Calcutta. It was neither accepted nor rejected until Clive expressed his approval in vigorous terms; from that moment its execution was decided upon. Suraja Dowlah was to be deposed, and Mír Jaffír, Commander-General of the Bengali army, was to reign in his stead. In return for the active assistance of the British, liberal compensation and gifts were to be given to the Company and its servants.

But Suraja Dowlah was suspicious. Clive, however, was equal to the occasion. He wrote in affectionate terms to the Nawab, calming his fears; and by the same courier he sent a letter telling Mír Jaffír to fear nothing, assuring him that he would march to his aid 'with five thousand men who never turned their backs.' Omichund was also in the plot, and was likewise to receive his reward. But he was not satisfied, and he demanded £300,000 sterling as the price of his fidelity. If it were not given, he declared that he would betray the whole plot to his master—that master whom he had already betrayed.

Again Clive was equal to the occasion. The English committee hesitated, but Clive determined to play off the arts of the Bengali intriguer against himself. Omichund would not be content unless an article guaranteeing the enormous sum he had named was inserted in the treaty between Mír Jaffír and the English; and he insisted on seeing it with his own eyes. Two treaties were therefore drawn up, one on white, the other on red paper. The former was the genuine treaty, and mentioned nothing of

Omichund: the latter, which was a worthless document only intended to deceive him, contained an article promising the fulfilment of his demands. But Watson could not bring himself to so degrading an action; and once more the plot was imperilled. Clive at once forged the admiral's name, and Omichund was convinced. The conspiracy was put in motion.

Into the right or wrong of Clive's action in this affair it is scarcely necessary to enter. He was dealing with unscrupulous men, and he became unscrupulous himself. In a country where deception was a commonplace of everyday life, he deceived even Asiatics at their own game. His dissimulation has been perhaps excessively blamed by those critics who have never been themselves placed in a difficult position, and who affect to judge all things by the canons of morality which should prevail in Europe. To men who are playing for a big stake allowances must be made, and the standard of ordinary conduct has occasionally to be relaxed. But for all that, and making every concession that it is just and possible to make, the conduct of Clive must be reprobated. To put the thing on its lowest ground, a few days proved that the elaborate plot was uncalled for: everything that was won in the year 1757 was won by honesty, and it would be difficult to find an example in any part of English history where permanent success has attended deception. The great strength of our position in dealing with other nations is the fact that our word may be relied upon; a promise is accepted because it is recognised that the performance will follow in due course. Had the methods used by Clive towards Omichund and Suraja Dowlah been generally imitated, our word would in time come to have had no more weight than that of the Indian or Kafir with whom we have treated. An imperial race can neither conquer nor maintain its conquests by falsehood. To argue the question in its ethical aspects is superfluous.

But Clive was now on the march. Suraja Dowlah lay with his enormous army a few miles distant, and it was time for Mír Jaffír to throw off the disguise of loyalty, and to assist the English against the Nawab. He, however, still hesitated; at the last moment he sent evasive answers.

It was an hour of great peril for Clive and his army. The force opposed to him was 40,000 infantry, armed with musketry and artillery, and 15,000 cavalry from the hardier races of the North. Against these Clive had hardly a thousand English troops and two thousand sepoys. He did not indeed know the exact number of the enemy; but he knew that the disparity was overwhelming; that if he were defeated neither he nor any of his men would ever return alive; that they would be exposed to the most hideous tortures the barbarian Nawab could devise. That his personal courage failed is unlikely: but a defeat meant not only his own destruction, but also the final loss of the English settlements in Bengal, perhaps in all India.

Plassey, 1757.

For the first and last time in his life, Clive shrank for a while from responsibility. He called a council of war; and the majority pronounced in favour of retreat. Clive declared his concurrence. Many years afterwards, he said that he had never consulted but one council of war, and that had he taken its advice the English would never have been masters of Bengal.

Almost immediately after the discussion, Clive was himself again. He retired alone under the shade of some trees, and rested there the space of one hour in deep thought. When he returned to the camp he had determined to put everything to the hazard; and orders were given that the advance should be made early on the following day.

Next morning the river which lay between the British and Suraja Dowlah was crossed, and a long day's march brought the armies within a mile of each other.

Encamping in a grove of mango-trees near Plassey, Clive could not sleep; the horrible din of drums and cymbals from the Nawab's camp was kept up the whole night; and the English general would have been more than human had he not been anxious about the morrow, the day which was to decide the fate of India.

Suraja Dowlah, we are told, was also oppressed by fears: but they were of a different kind. He was distracted by thoughts of the terrible retribution now being meted out to him. Always weak and timorous, he dreaded the small force of Clive far more than Clive dreaded his huge native army; always cruel, he now showed himself a coward. Distrusting every one who approached him, he was yet afraid to be left alone; fearing treachery among his officers, he feared also to take any step to discover whether it existed.

As the day dawned on 23rd June 1757, one year and three days after the massacre of Calcutta, the battle began. The massed battalions of Bengal began to move towards the grove where lay the English and their native allies. A cannonade on both sides commenced the actual conflict; but the artillery of the Nawab did hardly any damage, while our guns mowed his men down in quick succession. Some of his chief officers fell, and disorder spread through the ranks.

Suraja Dowlah was in a state of abject terror: and when somebody, endowed with as little courage as himself, suggested the expediency of a retreat, the advice was seized with alacrity. The order was given; and it decided the fate of the wretched prince. Clive snatched at the occasion, and at once commanded an advance. The native army now became a mob; the few Frenchmen who valiantly stood their ground were borne down by the weight of their flying allies rather than by the British attack.

In an hour all was over. The great army of Bengal was scattered to the four winds of heaven: 500 were

killed; and the camp, guns, baggage, wagons, and general paraphernalia of war had fallen into the hands of the English. Our loss was only 22 killed and 50 wounded.

Such was the battle of Plassey, the second great event in the British conquest of India. The first step had been the capture of Arcot, which began the conquest of the South; the second gave England the extremely valuable province of Bengal. The first broke the power of the French, for ever as it proved, although it was not expected to do so at the time; the second laid the foundation of British supremacy in the East.

But the full import of the victory was not yet realised. It was evident indeed that it gave us Bengal, that the East India Company was no longer in the position of a tenant occupying lands and offices and transacting business from those lands and offices, in precisely the same way that an English merchant might do in London; it was evident that the Company was henceforth superior to the Nawab, and not as hitherto the Nawab to the Company. It was seen that the Nawab must become a puppet, to be set up or pulled down according as he was obedient to his masters or not; but it was not seen, and in fact it could not yet be seen, that the victory of Plassey opened up to England the whole empire of India, and that all those vast territories which had never seen a European, all those inland kingdoms which had kept haughtily aloof from the foreign invaders, would in time acknowledge the British power, and become integral parts of the British dominions overseas.

The series of wars, in which Arcot and Plassey were the first achievements, occupied more than a century, and are not even now brought to a final conclusion; but the East India Company realised nothing of the future at the time, and, so far as can be ascertained, Clive did not himself see very much further than his masters. The Company wished to remain simple traders, and Clive wished to consolidate

what he had secured. The instinct of the English in India was fundamentally opposed to the construction of magnificent schemes such as animated the French; it is curious and instructive that in the end the English accomplished far more than Dupleix had ever dreamed of doing.

Book VII

THE ENGLISH ADVANCE IN INDIA: 1757-1828

CHAPTER I

CLIVE AND HIS POLICY: 1757-67[1]

The immediate results of Plassey were small, except in the personal sense that the victory enriched the servants of the East India Company in Bengal. Clive at once marched on Murshidábád, which readily opened its gates to the conqueror. There he took up his residence in a palace, whose garden was so large that the whole of the five hundred troops which accompanied him could encamp within it. Mír Jaffír was instantly installed as Nawab.

The wretched Suraja Dowlah, a prey to his own terrors, had escaped from the field of Plassey to Murshidábád: but, fearful of the vengeance of Clive, he had already left his own capital. Disguised in a mean dress, and taking with him only a favourite concubine and a eunuch, he let himself down at night from a window in his palace, and embarked on the river for Patná. He was recognised and forced to return. Exposed to the insults of Mír Jaffír, he writhed before his late minister in convulsions of fear, and implored with tears and

[1] Authorities.—Hunter, Orme, and Mill, Macaulay's *Essays*, and Malcolm's *Life of Clive*, as before. The pamphlets and records relating to the East India Company. The violent prejudice of James Mill against Clive renders him an unsafe guide except for the bare facts of Indian history during this period, while Malcolm, on the contrary, is full of undigested hero-worship.

lamentations the mercy to which he himself had always been a stranger.

Mír Jaffír betrayed some indecision ; but his son would not hear of clemency. Suraja Dowlah was taken to a secret chamber and there assassinated.

Of this act the English were ignorant till afterwards : for the time being the Company's servants were fully occupied in filling their pockets. Eight hundred thousand pounds, in coined silver, were sent down to Fort William. The whole of the royal treasury was thrown open to Clive ; he accepted between two and three hundred thousand pounds for his private purse. Even then considerable disappointment was expressed that Murshidábád did not furnish greater wealth : but, in mitigation of the avaricious spirit thus displayed, it must be remembered that the boundless wealth of the Orient was still proverbial. Experience had not yet taught Europeans to deduct the necessary discount from Eastern hyperbole ; and, however great had been the booty, it would certainly have fallen short of expectations.

Meanwhile, the news of the outbreak of the Seven Years' War had been received in Madras ; and the British officials there, dreading as before a French attack on the settlement, sent a positive command to Clive to return with the army. He disobeyed the order, and kept the troops. Again, a despatch arrived from London, in which the directors laid down new rules for the Company's stations in Bengal. The rules were unsuitable in any case ; they were drawn up before the result of Plassey was known in Leadenhall Street, and they made no mention of Clive.

In these circumstances, it was obvious that they could not be enforced : and the officials, who were designated in the despatch as constituting the new authorities over the British settlements in Bengal, felt justified in disregarding their instructions. Much to their credit, they induced Clive to retain the command. He did so ; and the next despatch

from England expressed the high approval of the directors at his success in Bengal, which was rewarded by his appointment as Governor of all their stations in that Presidency.

But the newly acquired British power in the East was still menaced in various directions. The French, under Bussy, were yet strong in the Deccan, and the Seven Years' War was at its height. After guerilla combats between France and England in the south of India, where for some time the chief episodes were the plundering by both sides of defenceless native villages, the French commander, Lally, arrived from Europe with a force which, in the opinion of Clive, was large enough to threaten all the English East India Company's possessions. He immediately took the offensive: and his exploits, when joined with the brilliant achievements of Bussy in the Deccan, might reasonably have been expected to win back the empire of Dupleix. Fort St. David fell at once: but all the old faults of the French East India Company were again displayed. No preparations for the campaign had been made at Pondicherri: 'I found not,' said Lally, 'the resource of a hundred pence on my arrival.' None of his countrymen would give him credit. None of them showed any zeal for the national cause, and dissensions and jealousies soon divided the garrison. Lally attempted the capture of Madras, but with the English fleet protecting that city his position became impossible. He was forced to fall back, and his failure became a subject of joy to his unpatriotic personal enemies at Pondicherri. His dreams of restoring the French name in the East began to fade: although he had written that 'It is the whole of British India which now remains for us to attack,' it was soon evident that the internal weakness of the French would prevent anything but occasional sallies on his part.

The British become the Supreme European Power in India.

Lally's prestige began to decline among the army, and dangerous signs of mutiny appeared; he was finally de-

feated by Eyre Coote before Wandewash in 1760. Pondicherri capitulated in the following January, and the last stronghold of the French in India, the hill fortress of Gingi, succumbed a few months later. 'That day,' says Orme, 'terminated the long hostility between the two rival European powers in Coromandel, and left not a single ensign of the French nation avowed by the authority of the government in any part of India.'

The Dutch Empire had already fallen. Letters had been sent from Chinsurah, their station in Bengal, urging the authorities at Batavia, the capital of the Dutch East Indies, to fit out an expedition which might balance the power of the English in India. The advice was attended to, and seven Dutch vessels from Java arrived unexpectedly in the Hugli. The force on board was greater than that at the disposal of Clive, for he had sent the greater part of his troops to assist in the struggle against the French. A serious difficulty menaced him, for Holland was not at war with Britain: and although the combatants of the East took little notice of the treaties of the West, the British Government might impeach him for an act of private hostilities against a friendly nation. But Clive knew that the traitor Mír Jaffír was in secret communication with the Dutch at Chinsurah; and, had he allowed the two to co-operate, the British power in Bengal would have been gravely threatened. The latter danger seemed greater than the former, and his decision was quickly made. The Dutch attempted to pass up the river; they were stopped by the English. A battle took place on both land and water; the Dutch were absolutely defeated, their ships taken, and their army routed. Chinsurah was besieged, but it could not hold out alone. The heads of the station were forced to come to terms, and it was agreed that Holland might retain the place, on condition that no fortifications were raised, and no troops save the necessary police maintained. Disobedience was to be

punished by the instant expulsion of the Dutch from the country.

The English East India Company had now no other rivals in India. The name of Clive and his victories was enough to prevent any native insurrection. An amusing but significant anecdote that has been preserved well illustrates the awe with which he was regarded. The Nawab Mír Jaffír had occasion to reprimand one of his chiefs, who allowed his followers to engage in a brawl with some of the Company's sepoys. 'Are you yet to learn,' he said to the delinquent, 'who that Colonel Clive is, and in what station God has placed him?' The answer was short and expressive. 'I affront the Colonel!' said the chief. 'I, who never get up in the morning without making three low bows to his jackass!'

A conspiracy of native chiefs against Mír Jaffír, who was on all sides rightly regarded as a mere tool of the English, was immediately suppressed; and that contemptible prince in gratitude granted Clive, as a personal present, the quit-rent of the East India Company's lands in Bengal. Its value was little less than thirty thousand pounds a year. Clive was now one of the richest men in the world; and a few months later he sailed for England, in the year 1760, to enjoy the fruits of his wealth, and to receive the honours, rewards, and adulation which there awaited him.

Few men had ever deserved better of their country. Since his time there has been no lack of able soldiers and statesmen to defend and enlarge our Asiatic possessions: before him there was not one who was capable of doing so. It was he who discovered the talent that lay dormant in such men as Coote and Hastings; it was he who created the tradition of British supremacy in the East: in a word, it was he, and he alone, who laid the foundation of the British Indian Empire.

But the greatness of Clive cannot be appreciated at its proper value till we have seen to what a depth of shame the East India Company in India sank during his absence,

and the state of anarchy and robbery from which he rescued it after his return. We have said that he created the tradition of British supremacy; and since his time our power in the East has only once been seriously endangered. But he had created no system of administration; he left behind him no tradition of government. It was still a recognised rule that the Company was to get as much and to give as little as it could, and its servants endeavoured not unsuccessfully to do likewise. The natives of India were notoriously evasive and deceptive in their dealings with foreigners, and the Company had too often followed their example. Clive himself had done so on occasion; and his acts, if not his words, proved that he thought deceit no crime when practised towards a native of India. The tradition of British supremacy in India was indeed maintained during his absence: nothing could undo that save the evacuation of our possessions there; but there was as yet no sense of responsibility towards our new subjects, no feeling that the privileges of rule entailed duties equally great towards those whom we governed.

The English Tyranny, 1760-5.

Clive was not a particularly scrupulous man, and he would scarcely have hesitated to take any step that, in his opinion, advanced the interests of his employers: but at least he embarked on no frauds or extortion to serve his personal ends. He was not rapacious or avaricious, although he had accepted gifts that strictly he should have refused; but those who came after him were to show to what tyranny men can stoop when they are not restrained by any dread of future retribution or any code of personal honour.

The English power in Bengal was supreme. In the south of India it was less firmly rooted, but still no native would have dared to question it. Certainly none of the peaceful Bengalis would venture to rebel, and Bengal was now by far the most important British possession in the East. The Nawab Mír Jaffír was a puppet in our hands; but soon after

the departure of Clive he displeased the governing Council at Calcutta. He was deposed; and another puppet, Mír Cossim, reigned in his stead. But the latter was not the negligible quantity that his predecessor had been: and therefore he too was deposed, and Mír Jaffír was again made Nawab.

From each revolution the servants of the Company took their profit. The treasury was in their hands, and they helped themselves to the utmost. The people were ground down by taxation; and every few months a fresh turn was given to the screw, as some new Englishman arrived at Calcutta to make a fortune.

But these evils were the least that the wretched natives had to bear. The private trade of the country was now engrossed by the Company's servants: the profitable commerce in salt, tobacco, and the betel-nut was all seized by them. They bought and sold at whatever prices seemed best to them. They refused to pay the transport duties; if a toll-collector complained, he was taken and imprisoned in one of the Company's stations.

Vansittart, the Governor, was appealed to; but he was too weak to end the abuse. He merely replied that he was 'unwilling to give up an advantage,' and he was unable to make others give it up. Warren Hastings was the only member of the Council who wished to stop the robbery; but alone he was unable to do anything, and his colleagues were all occupied in getting rich as quickly as they could.

Such tyranny as this had never been known in India. Other governments had been rapacious, had robbed their subjects, had tortured them, had put them to death. The English repression was of a different character. It cared nothing about the political complexion of the country. It is not on record that a single act of torture was committed, or that one man was executed unjustly. But for that very reason the tyranny was the more terrible, for its sole object

was to extort every available rupee from the pockets of the Bengalis, and to place them in the pockets of the Company's servants. The rapacity was merciless, and it was unending; for so soon as one foreigner had accumulated a fortune, he returned to England, and another took his place, whose object in coming was the same. Complaint was useless, for complaint could only be made to those who did the wrong. Rebellion was impossible, for the lesson of Plassey was not forgotten, and the Company's generals who still remained in India were worthy successors of Clive.

The misery of the land is well summed up by the Musalmán historian of the times in his description of the English tyrants. 'It must be acknowledged,' he says, 'that this nation's presence of mind, firmness of temper, and undaunted bravery are past all question. They join the most resolute courage to the most cautious prudence; nor have they their equals in the art of ranging themselves in battle array and fighting in order. If to so many military qualifications they knew how to join the arts of government; if they exerted as much ingenuity and solicitude in relieving the people of God, as they do in whatever concerns their military affairs, no nation in the world would be preferable to them, or worthier of command. But the people under their dominion groan everywhere, and are reduced to poverty and distress. O God, come to the assistance of thine afflicted servants, and deliver them from the oppressions which they suffer.'

Five years the tyranny continued unchecked. But the directors of the East India Company were already becoming alarmed at the condition of their oriental possessions. A conspiracy at Patná had necessitated the despatch of Hector Munro from Bombay; and a dangerous sepoy mutiny in the ranks was only quelled by his firmness. The war in the Patná district proved long and costly. 'The Company,' wrote one of the directors, 'was sinking under the burden, and obliged to borrow great sums off their servants at eight

per cent. interest, and even with that assistance were unable to carry on the war and their investment, but obliged to send their ships half loaded to Europe.' Military authority had become relaxed, and only terror now kept down the insubordination of the sepoys. The Company was in financial difficulties, yet its servants returned home millionaires.

The origin of the evil was well understood: and in a peremptory command, dated 8th February 1764, the directors endeavoured to stop it. 'One grand source of the disputes, misunderstandings, and difficulties,' said they, 'which have occurred with the country government, appears evidently to have taken its rise from the unwarrantable and licentious manner of carrying on the private trade by the Company's servants . . . to the prejudice of the Subah, both with respect to his authority and the revenues justly due to him; the diverting and taking from his natural subjects the trade in the inland parts of the country, to which neither we, nor any persons whatsoever dependent upon us, nor under our protection, have any manner of right. In order, therefore, to remedy all these disorders, we do hereby positively order and direct that, from the receipt of this letter a final and effectual end be forthwith put to the inland trade.'

But such measures were of no use while the salaries of the Company's servants in the East remained inadequate. It was not to be expected that men would exile themselves from home for several years to gain the paltry remuneration which the directors thought sufficient. It was absurd to suppose that they would give up their profits in trade, even though that trade was illegitimate, when those profits were the sole attraction that brought them to India, and the sole reason that kept them there. The directors' commands were contemptuously disregarded, and the situation became more and more dangerous. At length the proper step was taken. In spite

The Return of Clive.

of the opposition of enemies on the board of the Company in London, it was recognised that Clive was the one man who could cope with the problem; and he was appointed Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the British possessions in Bengal. After heated disputes and protracted negotiations he sailed; and in May 1765 he reached Calcutta.

The task before him was one of extraordinary difficulty. He himself called it a cleansing of the Augean stable. 'What do we hear of, what do we see,' he wrote, 'but anarchy, confusion, and what is worse, an almost general corruption.' To an intimate friend he expressed himself with a depth of feeling to which he seldom gave vent. 'Alas! how is the English name sunk! I could not avoid paying the tribute of a few tears to the departed and lost fame of the British nation—irrecoverably so, I fear. However, I do declare, by that great Being who is the searcher of all hearts, and to whom we must be accountable if there be a hereafter, that I am come out with a mind superior to all corruption, and that I am determined to destroy these great and growing evils, or perish in the attempt.'

His Reforms.

Unfortunately the powers granted him were loosely and jesuitically worded, and were at once contested by the Council at Calcutta. 'I was determined, however,' he said afterwards in his great speech in his own defence before Parliament, 'to put the most extensive construction upon them, because I was determined to do my duty to my country.'

Clive had not been a week in India before he intimated his intention of purifying the administration, and of finally putting an effectual stop to the illegitimate private trade which had been the source of most of the abuses. At the first meeting of the Council he announced his decision.

One of its members, who had notoriously been to the fore in acts of rapacity, made a show of opposition. Clive interrupted him, and haughtily demanded to know whether

he disputed the authority of the new government. The objector was cowed by the question, and denied any wish to obstruct. The other members uttered not a syllable of dissent.

Their opposition was none the less real, and Clive knew it. He was not blind to the difficulties and temptations with which he would have to contend. Had he been mercenary, had he been false to the trust imposed in him by the directors, he might have done anything he wished for his personal aggrandisement. His wealth was already great; he might have now made himself by far the richest man in the world. He might have connived at the private trade and the other abuses he was sent out to uproot; by sharing the spoils with his old colleagues, he would have made himself popular among them, and he could have satisfied the directors at home with pretended reforms that had no existence beyond the paper on which they were written.

On the other hand, the policy which he had sketched out as necessary to the welfare of both India and the East India Company was certain to procure him the undying hatred of the English officials in the Orient. It was by no means so certain that it would win the approval of the directors and proprietors. To enforce it would mean hard work in the teeth of the interested opposition of a gang of fortune-hunters, and that without any pecuniary profit for himself. Many another man would have grasped at the dishonest opportunity: Clive did not.

The destinies of the English in India had once before depended on his courage; they now depended on his honesty and sense of public duty as well. He was not avaricious. Indeed, he was able to declare later that he left India a poorer man after his third visit than after his second; and Clive was never afraid of opposition or unpopularity. He carried out the civil measures of reform

that he had planned with the same iron will that he had shown as a military commander.

The receiving of presents from the natives was straightway prohibited. No more of such forced benevolences disgraced the British name in India. Private trade was forbidden without any qualification. The whole English settlement rose in rebellion at these acts. Instead of quickly amassing riches and returning to Europe within a year or two, the greedy adventurers of Calcutta saw themselves condemned to half a lifetime of dreary routine work for little pay, and the prospect of an eventual landing at home almost as poor as when they embarked.

In the Civil Service.

But Clive was undaunted. He declared that if he were unable to find support in Bengal he would find it elsewhere. His chief opponents were dismissed, and other less factious assistants were obtained from Madras. By these stern measures resistance was quelled.

But it was evident that unless the salaries of the Company's servants were increased to a reasonable amount the old abuses would spring up again; or if that were avoided it would only be because an incompetent class of men who could get no better employment at home had accepted posts in the service. Either alternative was bad; but the directors were obstinate, and would not increase the salaries. Clive, therefore, took matters into his own hands.

A revised scale of remuneration was drawn up, which provided an adequate salary to each grade of the service; and the monopoly of salt was appropriated to its payment. James Mill, an historian whose invincible prejudice saw something to condemn in every deed of the British in India, was of opinion that the act was a tyrannous usurpation of authority on the part of Clive; and he believed that it would have no effect in restraining the abuses of private trade, for what had been in the power of the grasping before the arrival of the soldier-statesman would again be in their power after his

departure. To the former objection, it is sufficient to answer that the salt monopoly had been a source of Indian revenue many generations before the eighteenth century; its appropriation for the government service imposed no new hardship on the natives. On the contrary, it alleviated their burdens: for, in spite of the theoretic historian, the rapacity of the East India Company's clerks was immediately checked. In the success of the measure lies its justification.

The abuses of the civil administration were thus done away with: those of the military still remained. In a double sense their opposition was even more formidable than that of the civilians. Theirs was the supreme power in the country. They were old comrades in arms of Clive. They had been affected disadvantageously by the retrenchments ordered by the directors. And they now rebelled under the stern reforming hand of the old master whom they had loved and obeyed so well.

In the Military Service.

Two hundred British officers conspired against the government, and determined to resign their commissions on the same day. They acted in the belief that Clive would quail before an act which jeopardised the very existence of the British Empire in Asia. But they little knew with whom they had to deal. There were a few officers left on whom Clive could rely; he ordered up others from Madras; he gave commissions to mercantile agents, to anybody, in fact, who would support him at such a crisis; and the sepoys remained true to one who in past years had often led them to victory.

The mutineers were ordered to Calcutta: and they soon discovered that they had mistaken their man. They implored to be taken back into the service. But Clive was inexorable. The ringleaders were cashiered; some of the juniors were leniently treated; but he was inflexible in his determination to dismiss the chiefs who had deserted him.

While thus severe, however, Clive was not revengeful. It

was suggested that one of the conspirators had planned his assassination; but he would not listen to the charge. 'The officers,' he said, 'are Englishmen, not assassins.' From that time the military were obedient.

In the Native Government.

But these changes, great as they were, still left the relations between the East India Company and the enfeebled and declining native governments of India untouched. Yet Clive knew that after his return some ambitious or avaricious official could again pull down the existing Nawab, and set up his own nominee whenever he wished. The well-known series of events would begin once more: the prince who was deposed would conspire against the English, and he who was elevated to the throne would prove a traitor or a weakling, or both; a massacre would take place, as it had at Patná in 1763; a mutiny would break out, as in 1764; and the old vicious circle of continuous repression would recommence.

It was therefore necessary to alter the whole position which the East India Company held as masters of India. But first it was necessary to decide what their future policy was to be. Were they to extend their conquests indefinitely through the peninsula, or to be content merely to conserve what they had won?

An ambitious dreamer of the magnificent type of Dupleix would have taken the former course without hesitation. Had Clive been cast in the same mould he would have done so; had he been only a lover of military glory, he would probably have embarked on a vast series of conquests. But he was a statesman as well as a soldier, an employee of a commercial corporation as well as a ruler of kingdoms; and the day of the English dreamer in India was not yet.

He determined to cry a halt in the movement towards expansion. On 30th September 1765 he wrote: 'My resolution was, and my hopes will always be, to confine our assistance, our conquest, and our possessions, to Bengal, Bahar,

and Orissa: to go further is, in my opinion, a scheme so extravagantly ambitious and absurd, that no Governor and Council in their senses can ever adopt it, unless the whole scheme of the Company's interest be first entirely new modelled.' That he had the support of the directors in making this decision the whole tenor of their despatches shows. They had always protested against being made oriental sovereigns against their will. They detested the responsibilities that had been thrust upon them, possibly with an uneasy foreconsciousness that it would eventually bring about the interference of the British Parliament. For a century and a half they had been a trading company, and they still saw no reason why they should now change their course.[1] They continued, in fact, to condemn the policy of expansion for years after Clive left India. In a letter of 1768 they wrote: 'It is not for the Company to take the part of umpires of Indostan. If it had not been for the imprudent measures you have taken, the country powers would have formed a balance of power among themselves. We wish to see the Indian princes remain as a check upon one another, without our interfering.' In the following year another reprimand was sent out: 'It is with the utmost anxiety and displeasure that we see the tenth article of the treaty . . . a measure so totally repugnant to our most positive and repeated orders not to extend our possessions beyond the Carnatic. . . . The rage for negotiations, treaties, and alliances, has private advantage for its object more than the public good.'

Clive, therefore, in calling a halt, was aware that he would win the approval of his employers: but this certainly

[1] It may be noticed that they succeeded in remaining a trading company in China, without any territorial responsibility. But had the Chinese Empire shown the same signs of disruption as the Indian, they would probably have been forced to follow the same course there as in India. Circumstances favoured a continuance of the more limited policy in China, and opposed it in India; unfortunately for the directors, however, India was more important commercially than China.

weighed less with him than the good of the British name in India. The directors naturally approved his decision to stop territorial expansion; but they wished to go further, and give up something even of what they had acquired. On this point Clive was adamant. He wrote at once, 'With regard to the magnitude of our possessions be not staggered. Assure yourself that the Company must either be what they are or be annihilated.'

The measures he took may be briefly stated. On his arrival, he found the Nawab of Oudh threatening the British possessions. The mere name of Clive was enough to make the native prince sue for peace, and submit to pay one and a half millions sterling for the expenses of the war. Allahábád and Korah were returned to their original owner. In the provinces of Bengal, Bahar, Orissa, and the Northern Circars was set up what became known as the dual system: that is to say, the Mughal, titular sovereign of all India, was prevailed upon to issue a warrant, by which the English were to collect the revenues of those provinces, and to maintain the army. For this privilege the Company paid six hundred thousand sterling to the Nawab at Murshidábád, and half that sum to the Emperor at Delhi. The criminal jurisdiction still remained in native hands.

The Dual System.

When the miserable puppet who was installed as Nawab at Murshidábád heard of the sum he was to receive his one remark was, 'Thank God! Now I can have as many dancing-girls as I please!' His exclamation sufficiently characterises the class of men to whom the government of India had previously fallen. By the new arrangement, however, the English were the real masters; although by the fiction of the dual grant, they were the servants both of the Nawab and of the Mughal to whom they paid a subsidy.

Clive had thought of openly claiming the complete rule for the East India Company: but he hesitated, and finally declined to do so, on the ground that it would be more easy

to conduct negotiations with the other European traders in Asia through the medium of a native sovereign. The experience of a few years proved him to be mistaken. The dual system was cumbrous and unsatisfactory in working: it lasted only a short time. By it the English possessed the substance of power without the shadow; the course of events speedily made it necessary for them to possess both.

The next step forward, however, was left to another man. Clive had done his work: and after eighteen months in the East, his third and last visit to India came to an end in January 1767. Broken in health, he returned to England, there to spend those last few melancholy years which form so pitiful a contrast to his brilliant career in India.

CHAPTER II

WARREN HASTINGS: 1767-85 [1]

THE first years after Clive had taken his final departure from India were quiet and uneventful. The abuses he had put down did not revive to any extent. The new system of government introduced by him was on its trial.

Now, if at any time, the business of the East India Company should have been profitable; the directors should have been wealthy, the shareholders contented, and the staff well

[1] Authorities.—Gleig's *Life* for the personal history of Warren Hastings, with his own numerous writings. Hunter for his administration, supplemented by the masterly State papers penned by Hastings himself during his period of office. Mill is extremely prejudiced against Hastings; Macaulay's brilliant essay must be corrected by G. W. Forrest, *Selections from the State Papers of the Governors-General of India*, which have only recently been published. Macaulay's estimate of Impey must be rejected after the defence of that judge in the *Memoirs*, by his son; the important *Story of Nuncumar*, by Sir James Stephen; and Mr. Forrest's examination of his Indian career. The parliamentary debates and pamphlets published at this time in England, which are referred to at greater length in the next chapter, throw useful sidelights on the period. The pamphlets are often extremely acrimonious and contradictory; see, for example, *The Origin and Authentic Narrative of the Present Marratta*

paid and prosperous. As a matter of fact, the Company had seldom been in greater financial difficulties; and the troubles of the Board of Control were added to by the constant dissensions within, and the continual discussions which took place in public as to their methods of government, their policy of management, their treatment of the staff, and their conduct towards their Asiatic subjects.

England, in fact, was slowly beginning to realise that she had undesignedly conquered an empire; and her equanimity was disturbed by the knowledge that it was an anomaly that a trading corporation of London should be a sovereign power in Asia. For the moment, however, the national conscience was not seriously incommoded by the discovery.

The Famine of 1770.

But three years after Clive left India, an event took place which neither the statesmanship nor the business instinct of the East India Company could have foreseen or provided against. For the first time since they had emerged from the humble position of mercantile adventurers, one of those terrible famines which are the scourge of Asia confronted them; and the Bengal famine of 1770 was peculiarly memorable for its severity.

Famines had indeed constantly visited India. There is proof of their existence from the earliest times of which we have record. Every few years one part or another of the country had been devastated; but their very number prevented all but the most awful from being held in more than

War, and also the late Rohilla War, published in 1781, obviously in the interest of Sir Philip Francis, and taking throughout the most unfavourable view of Hastings. There are others, by the Governor-General's indiscreet friends, as partial to him as this is hostile. The political history of the events leading up to the first Maratha War is somewhat obscure, and the narrative rests on rather crumbling ground, in sharp distinction to the military history of that war and the war with Mysore, as also of the annals of Bengal and Madras, where no room for doubt can arise. The reaction upon Indian policy of the critical situation of European politics must be borne in mind throughout the whole period when Hastings was Governor-General. Some interesting details of Madras at this time will be found in Miss Robbins' work, *Our First Ambassador to China*.

local remembrance. Of the one that took place in 1630 a contemporary historian wrote: 'Life was offered for a loaf, but none would buy; rank was to be sold for a cake, but none cared for it; the ever bounteous hand was now stretched out for food. For long dog's flesh was sold for goat's flesh, and the pounded bones of the dead were mixed with flour and sold; men began to devour each other, and the flesh of a son was preferred to his love.' The same scenes of horror probably occurred at each visitation; but so far as can be known, the famine of 1770 surpassed them all.

The story is appallingly simple. The head of each family cultivated his own plot of ground: and when the rains failed for a season, the rivers shrank to rivulets, the crops did not appear, and the whole population of the Ganges valley was soon starving. Men died helplessly by the roadside; women who had never before shown their faces in public came forth into the streets, and threw themselves on the earth, with loud lamentations imploring in vain a morsel of rice for their little ones. The survivors were too weak to attend to the dying or administer the last rites to the dead; loathsome birds of prey fed openly on the corpses that strewed the cities and fields of the unhappy province of Bengal; thousands of those who perished were borne down by the Hugli past the English settlement of Calcutta.

It is said that ten millions died in a few months: the popular computation reckoned that six annas in the rupee, or six-sixteenths of the whole population of Bengal, perished in the famine.

It was rumoured that the servants of the East India Company snatched a wretched and inhuman profit by buying all the available rice and grain of the country, and selling it at many times its normal price to their starving subjects. The allegation seems to have been unfounded; for the honour of the English name, we may hope that it was; but it shows the opinion held at home of the morality of the East India

Company's employees. Public feeling in England was now thoroughly aroused, and sympathy with India was mingled with horror at the acts of its masters, for which England was indirectly answerable; and before the just indignation of the country could die away under some more exciting party political scare at Westminster, the first great parliamentary measure of Indian administrative reform was accomplished.

The cost of government, and the decreasing profits on its trade, had brought the Company into serious financial straits.

India and the British Parliament.

The Act of Parliament passed in 1769, permitting a renewal of the charter, contained more onerous provisions than had previously been required of the stockholders. Their property in India was granted for five years more, on condition that they paid into the English exchequer annually four hundred thousand sterling. By a sliding scale, their dividend might rise from ten to twelve and a half per cent.; if it fell below that sum their contribution to the exchequer was reduced; if it should be less than six per cent. no claim at all was to be made on them. But this did not improve their affairs: and three years later came the crisis. It was necessary to borrow from the Bank of England to save the Company from bankruptcy; and the Bank was unwilling to lend all that was required. Application was made to the British Government, and the British Government turned a deaf ear to the directors.

It was now August 1772; and already in January of that year the King's Speech at the opening of Parliament had mentioned the affairs of India as a possible subject of legislation. On 30th March a Bill had been brought in for the better regulation of the Indian service, and for improving the administration of justice in the East. Referred to a Select Committee, it was thrown out on second reading; but Parliament again met in November, much earlier than usual, in order to consider the position of the East India Company.

The Regulating Act, 1773.

The directors complained in vain of the interference; it was proposed to lend them money to carry on the business of the Company, and to allow them the profits and ownership of their territorial possessions for the ensuing six years that were unexpired of the term of their charter. Loud protests were heard that this was confiscation of property: but, on 3rd May 1773, the Government introduced an almost revolutionary measure. Some small alterations were to be made in the constitution of the Company at home, but the main changes affected India.

A Governor-General was to be appointed at a salary of £25,000 yearly, assisted by four Councillors with £8000 each. This was to apply to Bengal; and the other presidencies were to be subordinate to it. A Supreme Court of Judicature was to be established at Calcutta, with a Chief-Justice at a salary of £8000 and three judges at £6000. These were to be appointed by the British Government; the first Governor-General and Councillors were to be nominated by Parliament for the first five years; after that the patronage returned to the directors, but always subject to the approval of the Government; while everything in the Company's correspondence relating to civil or military affairs, the government of the country, or the administration of revenue, was to be laid before the British Cabinet for approval. No person in the service either of the king or the Company was to be allowed to receive presents, and the Governor-General, the Councillors, and the judges were to be excluded from all commercial profits and pursuits.

The Company again protested bitterly at the subversion of its chartered rights, and appeal was made to the City of London, the stronghold of commercial corporations, for aid in the struggle against a measure that was stigmatised as legal robbery. It was said that no property was safe when Parliament could thus despoil its owners; that it was manifestly unjust that the Company should be deprived

of the choice of its servants, while it was compelled to pay those appointed by others, and pay them, too, enormous salaries out of profits none too large. It was hinted darkly that what had happened to the East India Company might be the fate of other City corporations, and that it behoved all to stand together in defence of the first victim.

But the City took no action, although it must be admitted that a plausible case was made out. The weak point in the directors' argument was their ignoring the fact that it was abnormal for a commercial company to rule an empire. No other company was likely to find itself in such a position, and London could not be very seriously alarmed at a law that was evidently not really intended to confiscate property at all, but was only introduced in obedience to the higher principle that England as a whole was responsible for the acts of her people throughout the world. The directors also conveniently forgot that it was they who had first appealed to the British Government for aid; and that the administration of their Asiatic possessions had for years been a byword and a reproach.

If a commercial crisis and a political scandal together do not justify the interference of Parliament, then nothing does. The Bill was passed.

The first Governor-General of British India was Warren Hastings, a scholar and administrator, the strange romance of whose career is in itself an epitome of Anglo-Indian history for many years. Born of the old and honourable but decayed family of the Hastings of Daylesford, on 6th December 1732, it seemed likely in early life that the natural bent of his talents would make him a man of letters, perhaps a university professor. A good athlete at Westminster School, he took even more kindly to his book than to sport.

Warren Hastings, 1732-1818.

But the guardian in whose care the orphan had been placed had planned a different career for his charge. It was

in his power to obtain for Hastings a writership in the East India Company's service; and, despite the remonstrances of the latter's tutor, who offered to pay the expenses of his most promising pupil at the university, young Hastings was shipped off to the East in his eighteenth year.

It seemed that in all probability a life at the desk awaited him, a life whose main incidents were the making out of accounts, the posting of ledgers, and the correct filling-up of bills of lading. Nothing more engrossing occupied the average Anglo-Indian at that time, unless he engaged in the illicit private trade that alone could make him independent. To these unexciting pursuits was Hastings doomed; but his was a different spirit from that of the majority of his fellow clerks.

The taste for learning softened the fetters of commerce; the love of letters survived the cares of statesmanship and the long wrangles at the Council Board. He was the first Englishman in the East who took any interest in the magnificent literature of India; the first who troubled to gain anything beyond a perfunctory knowledge of the languages of the country. Clive had conducted all his affairs through an interpreter. The merchants of the Company were satisfied if they could speak enough of the vernacular to buy and sell advantageously. Hastings, on the other hand, studied the tongue of the people among whom he dwelt, and explored part, at least, of the sealed book of Eastern thought. It was through his personal exertions in later years that a few cultured Englishmen began to realise that there were Asiatic as well as European classics, and that a knowledge of the Sanscrit idiom might be as useful as that of ancient Greece.

It is not difficult to see that a man whose tastes led him to the then unprecedented course of learning what were still considered barbarous languages, would be an administrator of fundamentally different type from the ordinary

official: and whatever mistakes Hastings committed in the course of his career, however harsh and unjust he may have been at times to the land he ruled, there was always a world of difference between his policy and that of his predecessors.

His absorption in a dramatic series of political and diplomatic events has averted attention from his reforms in Bengal and the other provinces under British rule; the indignation of England at the autocratic excesses which stain his name is remembered, while much of his permanent work is forgotten, buried as it is in uninteresting State papers and dry legal documents; yet the administrative side of his career, neglected by his enemies when they impeached him, neglected likewise by too many historians who seize only on the picturesque and striking episodes of life, embodies, in fact, by far the most valuable part of his work.

The first two years of his life in India were spent uneventfully in the East India Company's office at Calcutta. Clive had despaired in a similar situation, and attempted to commit suicide; Hastings gave way to no such outburst of passion. His whole character, indeed, was one of quiet calm depth and strength. He had, at least in early years, the lack of assertiveness that is natural to the student; thus we find Clive, who soon noticed his ability, writing to him, 'I thought I discovered in you a diffidence in your own judgment, and too great an easiness of disposition, which may subject you insensibly to be led where you ought to guide.'

Seldom was there a greater mistake. Under an unimposing appearance, and with an apparent docility which may have led him at first to acquiesce in acts of which he must have seen the unwisdom, lay concealed an unconquerable will and a firmness of purpose not less inflexible than that of Robert Lord Clive. And his later career was to show that he possessed to the full the unscrupulousness inherent in great men when placed in a position of supreme power, the contempt for anything but the shortest cut to the required end, the necessary dis-

regard of the feelings and rights of opponents who do not matter, the requisite foresight to circumvent in advance those who may become dangerous.

Two incidents of his private life show the patient firmness with which he pursued any object that lay near his heart. As a boy, he had determined to win back the family estates at Daylesford, which the improvidence of his ancestors had lost. He has left an account of his childish thoughts in his own graceful style. A stream ran beside his home: and 'to lie beside the margin of that stream,' he wrote, 'and muse was one of my favourite recreations; and there, one bright summer's day, when I was scarcely seven years old, I well remember that I first formed the determination to purchase back Daylesford. I was then quite dependent upon those who were themselves scarcely raised above want; yet somehow or other the child's dream, as it did not appear unreasonable at the moment, so in after years it never faded away. God knows there were times in my career, when to accomplish that or any other object of honourable ambition, seemed to be impossible: but I have lived to accomplish this.' At his desk in India he still held to the idea, and it animated him throughout his whole career until he was successful.

Again, on his second journey out to India, he fell in love. The lady was already married to an ignoble German baron, who consented to a divorce; and Hastings waited patiently during the years that elapsed before the tardy law courts of Franconia pronounced the decree that freed her.

As a junior clerk Hastings was unassuming; as Governor-General of British India he indulged in no pomp or ceremony. A description of him by a French observer marvels at his lack of ostentation. He wore a plain suit of English broadcloth, without any of the customary ornament of lace and embroidery. His whole retinue was a dozen horseguards. His throne was a plain mahogany chair; and there were

plenty of similar thrones, said the amused Frenchman, in the hall. His table was sometimes neglected, his diet was sparing and always abstemious. His manners were far distant from pride, but still more distant from familiarity.

Such was the man who, having made his way by gradual steps from clerk to Councillor, became in 1772 Governor of Bengal, and three years later the first Governor-General of British India. It was not long before he inaugurated a new policy of reform, and swept away that dual system which Clive had introduced, and which it was now found impossible to continue with any advantage.

Revenue Reform.

All land in India had from time immemorial belonged to the State: the ryot, or cultivator, paying for its use part of the proceeds of his labour to the head of the State. The collector of this revenue was the zamindar: and it was his duty to receive the total revenue of his district, and to pay it over to the central office of revenue, deducting ten per cent. of the whole for his commission or salary. An elaborate system of assessment had been worked out: and even in the days when the Mughal Empire was falling to pieces, the system was adhered to. It must have been open to abuses at all times: the ryot was often mulcted of more than his due, and in practice he was powerless to resist. But during the days of anarchy that preceded the conquest by the British, the extortions of the zamindari had become almost unbearable. If they allowed the ryot to retain as much of the proceeds of his labour as was necessary for a bare existence, and for the sowing of his next year's crop, it was only because self-interest warned the zamindar that he should not utterly exterminate the person from whom he derived his wealth.

Nor did the system improve during the first years of the British administration. Besides the zamindar, the greedy officials of the East India Company had also to obtain their pickings; and an additional burden thus fell on the ryot.

The reforms of Clive made little difference: for if the servants of the Company were restrained, the proceeds now went into the treasury of the Company itself. Even during the terrible Bengal famine the revenue was pitilessly collected with the utmost rigour; and the whole country still continued to groan under the double tyranny, a tyranny which it was impossible to shake off, and useless to question.

It was this iniquitous state of things which Warren Hastings set himself to abolish. In a report on the working of the dual system he wrote, that, 'The Nazims exacted what they could from the zamindars and great farmers of the revenue, whom they left at liberty to plunder all below; reserving to themselves the prerogative of plundering them in turn, when they were supposed to enrich themselves with the spoil of the country.' There was indeed habitual extortion and injustice, which had its natural effect on the ryots. When there is tyranny above there will be concealment and evasion below; and the ryots, sure that they would be made to pay more than the just amount, endeavoured by subterfuge to pay less.

The adverse report of Hastings had immediate effect. The directors decided to 'take upon themselves by the agency of their own servants the entire care and administration of the revenue'; and, accordingly, the exchequer was removed to Calcutta, and European collectors were appointed to superintend the revenue and preside in the courts.

Such was the beginning of the reform; and from that time Hastings embarked on a long series of administrative experiments. Lands were let out in farm on long leases, but provision was made against the tyranny of the collectors; a native assistant was attached to every collector, to check his actions: and no servant of a collector was permitted to farm any part of the revenue. An old abuse, the receiving of forced 'presents' from the ryot, was stopped.

A still worse abuse than these remained: the ryot had been

preyed upon till he had been compelled to borrow money, lest he should be without the means for buying the seed for his next year's crop. He could only borrow from the zamindar; and the latter imposed a rate of interest that even a mediæval Jew would have considered extortionate. Precautions were taken to stop this exaction, which changed a free man into a slave: but the cancer was too deeply rooted in Indian life to be cut out at one operation. A later report from the Council expressed regret that they had been unable altogether to abolish the resort to usury: nor can their failure be wondered at, when we remember that, despite the land banks of modern India, that wretched parasite, the village moneylender, still grows fat on the proceeds of other persons' industry.

From the land, Hastings turned his attention to the legal system of Bengal. Here again all was chaos. In the original courts of India, the discretion of the judge was only bound by the Hindu scriptures and the commentaries upon them, by the customs of the country, and the interpretation put upon them by the Brahmans. The decisions were therefore often arbitrary, the interference of superiors frequent, and the whole procedure illogical. The rich went free, the poor paid a double penalty.

Legal Reform.

But if the abuse was great while the power of the Mughal Empire was yet untouched, it was ten times worse when each petty province possessed its own ruler; and it was aggravated during the first few years of the English conquest. No Englishman would submit himself to the control of the native courts; and since all power was in the hands of the English, the immediate effect was to reduce the always inadequate laws to a nullity.

No government worthy of the name could exist while this state of affairs continued, and Hastings set to work to bring at least some show of order into the Indian judicial system. His main idea is summarised in a note dated 24th March 1774, 'There can be but one government and one power in this

province.' Taking this as a guiding principle, a whole series of alterations was made. A council of control was set up, which had the right of revising the decisions of the lower courts. Two subsidiary courts, civil and penal, were appointed in each district. It was further ordained that a record of all the proceedings was to be made and preserved in every court. Exorbitant fines were prohibited. The judges had previously drawn their salaries in the shape of commission on all property in litigation; and this fruitful source of injustice and bribery was now abolished. At the seat of government there were established two supreme courts of appeal, which had power to review the decisions of all the inferior tribunals.

But beneficent as these reforms were, they proved insufficient, and in some ways, not altogether satisfactory. The lower courts were administered by natives: the superior courts by Englishmen. But the natives did not understand the principles of English law; the English did not understand the principles of native law. Again, perjury was common in the courts of law to which English barristers had been accustomed at home; but it was not that gross and detailed perjury which every witness swore on oath in an Indian court. Again, English ignorance of the manners, customs, ideas, and even the languages of India was profound; yet in no walk of life is a knowledge of these more essential than in legal practice.

It took years of further experiments before a satisfactory system was devised. The successor of Hastings found it necessary to place all the administration in English hands. In the nineteenth century a complete code was drawn up, and it has frequently been revised. Even now, after the continued improvements of over a hundred years, it is admitted that justice often goes astray, so great is the difficulty of arriving at a right decision when every hired witness perjures himself as few but Asiatics can; and remembering these facts, we shall find no great cause for surprise that the judicial system

set up by Warren Hastings did not give complete satisfaction. But at least it was an enormous improvement on the legal anarchy that had existed before his time; the real matter for wonder is that it answered as well as it did.

Hastings, however, was no Sir Oracle: he was fully aware of the imperfections in his work. At most it was done in a tentative, experimental fashion; it was always open to revision and improvement. And during the whole thirteen years of his administration he was forming and carrying out fresh projects in the rural administration of the country.

How much more he would have done had his hands been free it is impossible to conjecture: but his attention was continually called away from the work of reform by the general affairs of his territories, the dissensions and enmity of his Council, the insistent demand for money and more money from the directors of the Company, and the external politics of that part of India which was not yet under British rule.

So many were the demands upon his time, indeed, that at the end of his first six months as Governor he wrote home, in half-humorous despair: 'Here I am with arrears of months, and some of years to bring up; with the courts of justice to set a-going; with the official reformation to resume and complete; with the current trifles of the day, notes, letters, personal applications; every man's business of more consequence than any other, and complainants from every quarter of the province hallooing me by hundreds for justice as often as I put my head out of window, or venture abroad.'

Changes in the administration such as those outlined above transferred much power from native to English hands: but it was the abolition of the dual system of government that finally consolidated the dominion of the East India Company in Bengal. Here again Hastings introduced the wise principle, the necessity of which had now become evident, that one government should be supreme throughout the province. By the terms of Clive's

The Dual System Abolished.

arrangement, a large part of the revenue receipts were paid back in bulk to the titular emperor at Delhi, and a yet larger part to the titular native prince at Murshidábád, a wretched creature whose whole attention and substance was given to his dancing-girls and to sensual indulgence.

The first important step, the abolition of the dual government, was comparatively easy. Nearly the whole internal administration of Bengal had been delegated by the Company to a Musalmán of high rank, of great talents, and of few scruples, one Muhammed Reza Khan. The lucrative and splendid office which he filled was the object of many men's desire; and no man desired it more than Nuncumar, a Hindu of enormous wealth and commanding position, who had played an important part in all the recent political changes in Bengal.

The deceitful and intriguing character of Nuncumar was well known to every Englishman in Asia; but, although his untrustworthiness was admittedly evident to the directors of the East India Company, the words of the agents he employed in Europe were accepted by them without reserve. He induced them to believe that the dismissal of Muhammed Reza Khan from his office would be to their advantage: and accordingly Hastings received orders privately from London to relieve Muhammed of his functions, to arrest him, his family, and his followers, and to institute a strict inquiry into the whole administration of Bengal.

Hastings obeyed at once. The house of the doomed minister at Murshidábád was surrounded at midnight by sepoys; he was awakened, and, with his suite, at once brought down to Calcutta. Hastings' fellow-members of the Council, who had only been in India a few days when the arrest was made, were not informed until the deed was done; it is not probable that their objections would have weighed with him in any case. The trial of Muhammed was delayed on specious pretexts for many months, during which

time the dual system of government was abolished, the internal administration of Bengal was transferred to English servants of the Company, and the office of minister, which Muhammed had held, and Nuncumar had coveted, was abolished altogether.

The revolution being thus quickly completed, Hastings proceeded to investigate the charges against Muhammed Reza Khan. A lengthy inquiry into his conduct took place: he was finally pronounced innocent, and set at liberty. Soon afterwards, the allowance made by agreement to the Nawab of Bengal was reduced at a stroke from £320,000 a year to half that sum. By a similar agreement, the Mughal had also received a large annual sum from the Company in token of his sovereignty, and the districts of Korah and Allahábád had likewise been ceded to him. Hastings now declared, what was in fact correct, that the sovereignty was a fiction. It was, therefore, announced that, for the future, no more tribute would be paid, and that the two provinces would be reclaimed.

But these two provinces would have been unlikely to bring in any profit to the Company, and they would have been expensive to maintain withal. A convenient opportunity presented itself: the ruler of Oudh was anxious to extend his possessions; a bargain was struck, and the districts of Korah and Allahábád were disposed of to him for some half a million sterling.

The revolution was therefore accomplished, not only without a blow being struck, but in a manner that made it immediately profitable to the East India Company. And it was well for Warren Hastings that it was so, for the East India Company was now again in financial straits.

The directors were sending urgent requests to the Governor-General by every ship, requests that were in reality commands; and he knew that, in their eyes, his success or failure as a Governor largely depended on the number of thousands of

rupees he sent home. His masters instructed him, indeed, to rule benevolently, to be a father to the people committed to his care; oppression should no longer sully their administration, and tyranny was far from their thoughts; but at the end of every moral discourse came the inevitable demand for money.

Writing from the Company's London office in Leadenhall Street, without any personal acquaintance with the East, the directors were probably unaware—for they were passably honest men—of the inconsistence between their desire for good government and better dividends.[1] Everybody in England at that day thought of India as a country rolling in wealth, and would have laughed to scorn any one who told them the contrary. Yet the contrary would have been the truth, in spite of the fortunes that had been brought home by the Company's servants. But to the directors it seemed an easy thing for their representative on the spot to send over another half million or million sterling a year; and Hastings found it necessary to turn his attention to economies in every direction.

The methods that he employed did not tend to elevate the fame of Britain in the East; nor did they leave the name of Warren Hastings unsullied. We remember, it is true, his excellent administration in Bengal, and the promptitude with which he succoured Bombay and Madras in the hour of disaster; but we are likewise compelled to remember the Rohilla War, and the extortionate tribute exacted from Chait Sinh and the Begams of Oudh.

The Rohillas were a brave but fickle tribe of military adventurers, full of the warlike fire and the predatory instincts of the Afghán races, who had settled in the district called after

[1] In 1766 the East India Company had unwisely raised its dividend from six to ten per cent. The directors disliked the idea, but were overruled by the General Court of Proprietors. The Company was heavily in debt at the time, and it was quite impossible to maintain so high a figure in subsequent years.

them Rohilkhand.[1] When the Mughal Empire had been in its vigour under the strong rule of Aurungzeb, their services had been well rewarded; and they held their territories as military fiefs of the supreme head of India. In the anarchy that succeeded the death of that great monarch, they became practically independent; but the Marathas had recently attacked them with success, and the Prince of Oudh, whose country was now also threatened by the Marathas, agreed to protect them against the common foe.

The Rohilla War, 1774.

A treaty was made; the Rohillas were protected. But they refused to pay the tribute which they had promised in the hour of danger; and Suja Dowlah, the Prince of Oudh, determined to take possession of their country.

Here, however, a difficulty presented itself. The Prince of Oudh doubted the ability of his own troops to perform the task; and he suggested to Warren Hastings that the East India Company should lend him a sufficient force to conquer the Rohillas. The Governor-General demurred, although he admitted that there were powerful arguments in favour of reducing the Rohillas; but after a time he consented. For forty lakhs of rupees, for four hundred thousand pounds sterling, it was agreed that a division of the British Indian army should undertake a campaign against the Rohillas. It was further stipulated, with that careful precision which distinguished every act of Warren Hastings, that the full expenses of the campaign should be borne by Suja Dowlah.

The work was begun. The British army in Bengal consisted of three brigades; one was sent to join the forces of the Prince of Oudh. The Rohillas expostulated when they realised the fate that awaited them, but in vain. They

[1] Mr. G. W. Forrest's recently published *Selections from the State Papers of the Governors-General of India* are essential to an understanding of this campaign, where too many people—myself, I regret to admit, among others—have been misled by Macaulay's brilliant inaccuracies in the celebrated *Essay on Warren Hastings.*

offered a large ransom. It was refused. They then determined to defend themselves to the last.

A terrible battle was fought. 'They gave proof,' said the English officer in command, 'of a good share of military knowledge; and it is impossible to describe a more obstinate firmness of resolution than they displayed.' The day seemed doubtful, and the cowardly Suja Dowlah fled. But at length the Rohilla army was broken by the valour and science of the Europeans. The battle was lost, and with it the country which the Rohillas had made their own; for the Prince of Oudh reappeared in the hour of victory, and his followers at once began to plunder and pillage. The original inhabitants of the country which the Rohillas had conquered seem to have been left undisturbed; but the homes of the Rohillas were fired, and the men who were left alive fled with their wives and children to the jungle, to the haunts of wild beasts and venomous serpents.

In the plunder that followed the battle the British troops took no part; but, as they watched the excesses of their native allies, they were heard to grumble that 'we have had all the fighting, and these rogues are to have all the profit.'

Not all, however; for when the British troops returned to Bengal, the treasury of the East India Company was richer by forty lakhs of rupees. The treasury of the Company was replenished, but the honour of the Company and of its Governor was sullied; for the employment of the British troops in the Rohilla campaign, which might have been justified if not very cordially approved had no pecuniary consideration been present in the background, became indefensible when they were hired as mercenaries by an ally.[1]

[1] Putting aside the exaggerations of Burke and Macaulay, the crux of the inquiry into the justice or injustice of the Rohilla War evidently lies in the answer to the question, Would Hastings have allowed the British troops to participate in the campaign without payment for their services? To that question there can be no precise answer; but I do not think the answer is doubtful. Hastings obviously disliked the transaction; but, apart from any political advantages, the money was a great considera

The treasury of the East India Company was replenished. But only for a time; in the later years of Hastings' administration there were heavy war expenses to be met; and he again cast about for a large and immediate supply of money. The Chait Sinh episode and the plunder of the Begams of Oudh was the result. Chait Sinh was Rájá of Benares, the sacred city of the Hindus: and the tract of country of which Benares was the capital had come under the protection of the East India Company some years before, when the misrule of the Nawab of Oudh had oppressed all the neighbouring provinces. The Rájá was bound by treaty to send an annual tribute to Calcutta; but in 1778, when Hastings again required money to meet the cost of the war which had just broken out with France, an additional sum of fifty thousand pounds was demanded from the subject prince. It was paid. The same contribution was exacted in the two subsequent years.

The Conquest of Benares.

Now Benares was a rich and well-governed province, and its Rájá a popular and able ruler. But the extraordinary tribute seemed about to become permanent; and it would have been a considerable drain on the revenues of Chait Sinh. He therefore offered secretly a large bribe to Hastings, in hopes that the additional tribute would be excused. The Governor-General after some hesitation accepted the money, and paid it over to the Company; but he still insisted on both the regular contribution and the extraordinary sum. Chait Sinh pleaded poverty; and Hastings at once added a

tion. And the Select Committee reported 'that the terms proposed appear highly advantageous to the Company, not only on account of the sum which is ultimately stipulated as a consideration for this service, but by immediately relieving them from the heavy expense of a large part of their army. Provided, therefore, full assurance and security can be obtained of the Vizier's intention and ability to make good the many payments which will in this event be due to the Company: Resolved that the Second Brigade now quartered at Dinapore he ordered to march on the Vizier's requisition.' (*Secret Select Committee's Proceedings*, 26th November 1773; quoted by G. W. Forrest.) The financial aspect of the transaction was evidently uppermost in the minds of the Committee.

fine of ten thousand pounds for contumacy. The money was paid. But still the Company's treasury was dry. Hastings therefore picked a quarrel with the Rájá, and insisted on half a million sterling.

To secure prompt payment he came on a visit to Benares, and was received by the subject prince with every mark of reverence. Chait Sinh excused himself, and justly, from giving way to the extortion; Hastings at once placed him under arrest.

But the British force which had accompanied the Governor-General was small; it was in a foreign province; and the inhabitants of that province were very different men from the unwarlike Bengalis. An insurrection broke out; the English and their sepoys were almost exterminated, and Chait Sinh escaped.

Hastings was left in a position of grave peril, with less than fifty men at his back; the building in which they were entrenched was surrounded on all sides by the enemy; and the whole population of Benares had risen to defend its prince against the tyrant.

Not for an instant, however, did the cool courage of Hastings desert him. Messengers were sent to expedite the arrival of the English troops from Bengal: in the meantime, the little band at Benares kept up a stubborn defence. The British army came up-country at forced marches to the aid of their beloved Governor-General: the disorderly levies of the Rájá were easily defeated; Chait Sinh fled in despair, and never returned; and the province of Benares was included in the territories of the East India Company.

The conquest added an important country and another two hundred thousand sterling annually to the British revenues. But the immediate relief to the treasury was small, and the expenses of the war were growing ever greater. Hastings was forced to turn elsewhere for yet further supplies. To a not very scrupulous and desperate

The Oudh Plunder.

man, aware of his own strength and the weakness of those among whom he was placed, it was not difficult to find another object of plunder.

There were two ancient ladies, the mother of the late and the mother of the existing Nawab of Oudh, who were known as the Begams or Princesses of Oudh. The revenue and the administration of that country were in their hands, and they were generally known to be enormously wealthy.

Here, then, was the opportunity: the pretext was soon forthcoming. Hastings declared himself convinced that the late disturbances in Benares had been fomented by them: and they were condemned to pay the penalty of an enormous fine. They protested; but their protests were disregarded. The princesses were confined to their rooms, and their food was limited. Two eunuchs in their service were tortured. Month after month the extortion was continued, until at last even Hastings realised that there was no more to be obtained. They were therefore restored to liberty; but the treasury of the Company had in the meantime been enriched by twelve hundred thousand pounds.

It would be superfluous to comment on these proceedings, save to remark that their only mitigation is that they did not spring from private greed; and that, had not the requirements of the East India Company necessitated money from any and every available source, Hastings would certainly never have stooped to such methods of obtaining it. It is, however, impossible to refrain from noticing that even in his extortion he showed wisdom. Benares and Oudh were plundered; but the Governor-General never touched his own people in Bengal. He thought it better that the booty should be obtained from strangers, rather than that the province for which he was peculiarly responsible should suffer; and the result was that when, some years later, Burke was thundering in Westminster Hall against his cruelty to the Indians, his humanity was a proverb among the Bengalis,

and Hindu mothers sang their children to sleep with a lullaby of the glorious deeds of the great and good Warren Hastings.

The difficulties, indeed, with which he had to contend in Bengal were of a different character. The Regulating Act, passed by the British Parliament in 1773, had come into force. By it Hastings was appointed first Governor-General of Bengal, with control over the other two presidencies; and he was to be assisted by four Councillors. Of these four, one was already in India, and he generally supported his chief in the subsequent disagreements.

Dissensions with the Council.

The other three came direct from England: and with the captious spirit that marked their whole subsequent bearing, they had no sooner landed at Calcutta than they began to complain. It seemed throughout that their main idea was to harass and not to assist Hastings in the government of India.

A few months after their arrival he summed them up tersely but accurately: 'The General (Clavering) rummages the consultations for disputable matter. Monson receives, and I have been assured descends even to solicit, accusations. Francis writes.' Led by the latter, who from the first was a bitter and uncompromising opponent of Hastings, they had the majority in the Council: and they straightway proceeded to inquire into all, and to undo as much as possible, of the administrative work which the Governor-General had accomplished in previous years. Hastings was powerless; though head of the Council, he was forced to submit to their demands.

Their deeds were of little advantage to the country. 'The effect of their reforms,' says Macaulay, 'was that all protection to life and property was withdrawn, and that gangs of robbers plundered and slaughtered with impunity in the very suburbs of Calcutta.'

The natives were quick to mark the changed position; and accusations against Hastings began to pour in from those who hoped to curry favour with the new Council. They

were all received with alacrity; whether believed or not, the charges were acted upon. Hastings indignantly but rightly refused to preside at a Council whose members presumed to sit in judgment upon him, and whose personal vindictiveness was evident to all the other English residents in the presidency; and after a violent altercation, he left the meeting.

The worst accusation against the Governor-General had been brought by Nuncumar. The two men had never been friends, even in early days at Murshidábád; and since Hastings had used the Hindu as a tool in deposing Muhammed Reza Khan and abolishing the dual government, Nuncumar had hated the Governor of Bengal with the cunning patient hate that can await the day of reckoning for years. With the arrival of Sir Philip Francis came at last the opportunity he sought. He charged Hastings with putting offices up to sale, with taking bribes and conniving at the escape of criminals, and with other equally serious offences.

Francis eagerly accepted the accusations, which Nuncumar professed himself ready to prove beyond the shadow of doubt; but when he was called upon to do so, he was unable to produce the evidence upon which his charges rested. The failure of so vindictive an enemy to substantiate his accusations against Hastings is a sufficient proof of the baselessness of his charges.

But the end of Nuncumar's long career was now near at hand. An old accusation of forgery was still hanging over his head, for which he had been imprisoned for contempt of court and released by Hastings some time before the Council had arrived in India; and the trial had stood over for the consideration of the Supreme Court of Judicature in Bengal, the new Judicial Court which had been set up by the Regulating Act of 1773.

The judges of that Court had now arrived in India; and Nuncumar was brought before them in due course. There

can be little doubt that Francis and his supporters on the Council would have prevented the trial of the enemy of Hastings had it been within their power to do so; but the Regulating Act had placed the administration of justice beyond the control of the Council.

On the 8th June 1775 the trial of Nuncumar began before Chief-Justice Impey, three other judges of the Supreme Court, and a jury. The case had aroused enormous interest, and the old Mayor's Court of Calcutta was crowded with spectators; for Nuncumar had been a leading man in Bengal for many years past, and his recent accusations against the Governor-General were known to the public.

The trial was prolonged for several days, for the case was difficult and complicated. The evidence was intricate; and the fact that it was necessary to interpret it continually delayed the proceedings. Many of the witnesses for the defence were evidently perjuring themselves; and the judges, who were unaccustomed to the gross perjury that prevails in the East, were compelled to examine them somewhat closely.

But at length the case drew to a close. Chief-Justice Impey began his charge to the jury, and he was about to direct them to acquit the prisoner when Nuncumar demanded that one of his witnesses should be recalled. The request was allowed; but the accused, who had wished to fortify his case by further evidence, had unknowingly wrought his own ruin. The demeanour of the witness was suspicious; his evidence was palpably false; and the case for the defence broke down completely.

The jury, after proper direction, consulted together in private; Nuncumar was found guilty, and sentenced to death. The condemned criminal appealed with piteous entreaty to Francis; but Francis did not move a finger to succour the man whose accusations he had been so ready to accept; and Nuncumar was executed.

By the evidence of the case and the letter of the English law, he was certainly guilty of the offence with which he was charged. And the extreme sentence of the English law for forgery at that time was death, although the capital penalty was not always enforced even in England. But the English law had only recently been introduced in India, and forgery was considered a venial crime in the East.

These considerations might have been urged on behalf of Nuncumar; but they were not. For the interest which Calcutta had taken in the case had little to do with the abstract theory of law; it had little to do even with the actual guilt of Nuncumar. The popular interest was due to the fact that Nuncumar and Hastings were deadly enemies, and that Hastings stood alone in Bengal, while Nuncumar had the support of the Council. The acquittal of Nuncumar would therefore have been regarded as a convincing proof that the Governor-General had lost his power in Bengal, and accusations against him would have been multiplied by the thousand. The condemnation and execution of Nuncumar, on the other hand, were at once taken as a signal victory of Hastings over his powerful enemy.

The coincidence between the accusation which Nuncumar had brought against Hastings, and the execution of Nuncumar so shortly afterwards was at least suspicious; and many of the enemies of Hastings, in England as well as in Bengal, believed that he had instigated the prosecution of Nuncumar before the Supreme Court, and that he had influenced the sentence which was passed upon the forger. But no satisfactory evidence in support of that supposition has ever been discovered; and although determined attempts have been made to manufacture the evidence that was not forthcoming, and to blacken the character of Judge Impey in order to reflect on Hastings, these attempts have all been shown to be baseless.

But if Hastings was innocent of tampering with the course

of justice the execution of Nuncumar had served him in good stead. From that day there were no more accusations, true or false, brought against him before the Council.

And in time he was once more master of Bengal. One of the members of the Council died; and by his own vote, his casting vote as Governor, and the vote of his old supporter from the first, Hastings could now override the malice of his opponents. Sir Philip Francis indeed continued to grumble, to criticise, and to interfere; but now that he was in a minority, he was harmless.

One last quarrel there was. 'I do not,' said Hastings at one of the meetings, 'trust to Mr. Francis' promises of candour, convinced that he is incapable of it. I judge of his public conduct by his private, which I have found to be void of truth and honour.' The harsh words were thoroughly justified, but a challenge naturally followed; and Hastings was imprudent enough to risk his life in a duel, in which, however, Francis was wounded.

The latter recovered, and formal meetings continued at the Council Board; but Francis soon afterwards returned to England, where, from his seat in the House of Commons, he continued to declaim against Hastings and all his work in India with unabated vigour and unceasing hate. When the Governor-General finally returned from Bengal, Francis was one of the chief agitators for his impeachment; but for the remainder of the great administrator's career in the East, the malice of his opponent touched him no more.[1]

Thus victorious over his enemy on the Council, Hastings disavowed the resignation that, in a moment of despair, he had instructed his agent in London to hand to the East India Company; and though he was

The Imperial Danger.

[1] Sir Philip Francis died, as he had lived, a disappointed and bitter man. It had been his ambition to be appointed Governor-General of India, and he continued for many years to hope that the post would be offered to him; but happily for the British Empire in India, his desire was not gratified.

censured both by his employers and by Parliament for his arbitrary acts, neither the directors of the Company nor the ministers of the Crown were prepared to dismiss him. The dangers then threatening the Empire on all sides were far too serious to allow of one of its foremost men being recalled to answer for his crimes, however great those crimes were believed to be.

The crisis was indeed a terrible one. The English colonies in America were in revolt, and the British armies were not victorious against them. France had been quick to seize the opportunity, and had declared war against her neighbour. Spain had followed France. Everywhere Britain seemed about to lose those magnificent conquests which had been made under the first Pitt; everywhere, that is, but in India. And even in India the situation was black enough. The news of our defeats in the West might reach the East at any time; a native rebellion would follow as a matter of course. There were already many indications of local unrest. The French were known to have designs on India: and their capacity as leaders of native levies and as rulers of other races had already been well proved. So long as a statesman of the capacity of Warren Hastings remained at the head of affairs, there was a reasonable probability of safety in the East: if he were removed, it was a matter of chance whether a second Clive would step into the breach. Hastings, therefore, though censured by his employers for those deeds which he would not have committed but for their continual demands for money, and though blamed by Parliament for acts to which he was driven by those Councillors whom Parliament itself had approved, was suffered to remain Governor-General of India. His countrymen generously refrained from putting Hastings on trial until after he had saved the Empire for them.

Meanwhile, a complicated series of events had already led up to the outbreak of the first important war since the

departure of Clive from the East. The Marathas were the great military confederation of the Hindus; and since their rise in the seventeenth century on the ruins of the Mughal Empire, there were few parts of India that had not felt their power.

The First Maratha War.

About the year 1634, when the whole government of the peninsula was in confusion, an adventurer had begun to play a conspicuous part in the struggles of the Deccan. In his own district he quickly became supreme. Native levies formed his armies, and a primitive but terrible warfare was waged. The neighbouring peasants, of whom his troops mainly consisted, were called together at the slacker periods of the agricultural year, and armed and mounted by him; and they swept down upon their enemies, who for the purposes of plunder were anybody whose possessions were great enough to be attractive. Part of the booty was made over to the victorious peasant-soldiery, who returned well-rewarded to their homes; part remained to the leader of this strange army, who retired to his strongholds in the hills until necessity or humour should prompt another raid.

Such was the beginning of the great Maratha confederation. The system grew and flourished; a number of kings or chiefs arose in various parts of India, loosely allied in common defence; and later the general centre of the community was established at Poona.

When the military head of the confederation sank, as did the autocrat of every Asiatic monarchy after two or three generations, into an effeminate and slothful fop, caring only to live in luxury, to toy with dancing-girls and to chew bhang, the nominal chieftainship was still vested in him; but the real rulers of the Marathas from that time were the Peshwás, whose position as mayors of the palace at Poona was much the same as that of the masters of the French Merovingians.

Towards the middle of the eighteenth century, however,

the strength of the Marathas declined somewhat, and they could no longer continue altogether successfully their old policy of balancing the power of the great potentates of the north of India against the growing Musalmán States of the south in Haidarábád and Mysore. But they were still a formidable foe. In the year 1742 they invaded and plundered Bengal as far as Murshidábád; and the terror of the English residents of Calcutta lest their city also should fall a prey to the robbers was shown by the great semicircular moat which was hurriedly constructed, and which is still known by the name of the 'Maratha ditch.'

But when Clive had consolidated the British power in Bengal, the Marathas were no longer able to menace that rich province; in 1761 they were defeated in a great battle by the Mohammedans; and from that day they seemed doomed to gradual decay and extinction, as numberless other similar confederations had decayed and died out before them.

In these circumstances, it is not surprising that the British Council at Bombay, wishing with pardonable enthusiasm to emulate the policy of expansion so successfully pursued by Clive and Hastings in Bengal, should have decided to place their own creature on the throne of Poona. The Treaty of Surat was the consequence of a long continuance of diplomatic intrigues between Bombay and Poona; the aim of the British was apparently achieved, and their nominee reigned for a time over the Marathas.

But not for long was he suffered to remain in quiet possession. The military confederation of Western India was of a different character from the supple and enfeebled Bengalis; and war soon broke out between the Marathas and the British, which the Bombay presidency found itself ill-equipped to wage successfully.

The Treaty of Surat had been disapproved by Warren Hastings from the moment he heard of it; he foresaw that

it would merely result in embittering the constant disputes between the Marathas and the Government of Bombay into war. And there were already rumours of French intrigues with the Court of Poona, of French promises to assist the Marathas against the English, of French schemes to set up a second Empire in the East.

But when war broke out between the Marathas and Bombay, England and France were still nominally at peace. The situation was a delicate one; but Hastings immediately sent the whole force of the Bengal army to the aid of Bombay; and when shortly afterwards the news arrived by letter from the British Consul at Cairo that the long-expected war with France had broken out, the few remaining French settlements in Bengal were seized, and instructions were sent to Madras that Pondicherri should be occupied at once. Military works were thrown up near Calcutta; arrangements were made for the defence of the river Hugli; nine new battalions of sepoys were raised, and a corps of native artillery were formed of the Lascars from the Bay of Bengal.

The practical genius of Hastings was shown by these steps: and, so far as Bengal was concerned, he could now await the war with calmness, unless a large French force should arrive and join itself with the Marathas, and possibly also with the two great Mohammedan powers of the south, Haidarábád and Mysore—a somewhat unlikely contingency.

But in Bombay the position was more difficult. The British army that was stationed in that presidency had been surrounded by the Marathas, and forced to agree to a humiliating convention at Wargaum; and the troops which had been sent from Bengal had to undertake a long and perilous journey through the peninsula from coast to coast before they could be of assistance.

But Goddard, who was in charge of the latter contingent, succeeded in forcing his way across India, and, in addition,

seized the great province of Guzerat almost without striking a blow. Captain Popham, too, attempted and achieved a feat which even the daring Sir Eyre Coote stigmatised as 'absolute madness'; he attacked by storm, and captured, the rock-fortress of Gwalior, which had been called the key of India.

The effect of these victories, and especially of this last brilliant exploit, on the natives, must have been great; and Hastings began to question whether it would not be advisable to crush the whole dangerous Maratha confederation in one struggle, and to bring all the States loosely allied under that name to acknowledge the paramount British authority, before permitting peace to be made. Gwalior was already in English hands; but the capital of Poona was still the seat of the Peshwás; and the other three centres of Maratha power, Indore, Baroda, and Nagpúr, were as yet untouched.

It would have been a happy thing for British India had the Governor-General been able to carry out his idea of overthrowing the Maratha States; for they remained a menace for many years afterwards, and were only conquered eventually after two long and arduous wars in the next century. But after the first onslaught, the British found themselves opposed with a resolution which, if it did not result in their defeat, at least checked their advance: and for long the contest remained undecided.

Eventually the first Maratha War was concluded tamely in the year 1782 by the Treaty of Salbai. The British dominions were enlarged by the retention of Salsette, with Elephanta and two other small islands; but except for these wretched acquisitions—poor reward for three years' fighting—the *status quo* was restored. The conflict, profitless at best, had made considerable demands on the British Indian revenues, which Warren Hastings found it difficult to replenish: he had long been sick of a war which was not of his making, and which he had disapproved from the first;

and when the new and terrible name of Haidar Ali of Mysore began to be heard from end to end of India as that of the most formidable native foe the English had ever had to encounter in the peninsula, he hastened to make peace with the Marathas on the best terms he could.

To Hastings, indeed, was unjustly given the blame of the war having occurred at all. 'The Maratha War has been, and is yet, called mine, God knows why,' he complained in 1780; 'I was forced into it. It began with the acts of others unknown to me. Perhaps the war with Haidar may be, in like manner, called my war.'[1]

The Government of Bombay had been too forward in trying to extend its possessions; the Government of Madras had pursued a policy the exact reverse. The result was the same in both cases, a prolonged and profitless war; but as the penalties of daring are commonly less than those of timidity, so was the war with the Marathas insignificant in comparison to that with Mysore. The Government of Madras had been for years notorious for its feeble

The First Mysore War.

[1] The policy of Hastings was essentially pacific; it cannot be better defined than in his own words: 'The land required years of quiet to restore its population and culture; and all my acts were acts of peace. I was busied in raising a great and weighty fabric, of which all the parts were yet loose, and destitute of the superior weight which was to give them their support, and, if I may so express myself, their collateral strength. A tempest or an earthquake could not be more fatal to a builder whose walls were uncovered, and his unfinished columns trembling in the breeze, than the ravages or terrors of war to me and all my hopes. . . . I should have sought no accession of territory. I should have rejected the offer of any position which would have enlarged our line of defence, without a more than proportionate augmentation of defensive strength and revenue. I should have encouraged, but not solicited, new alliances. . . . These I should have observed as my religion. . . . But though I profess the doctrine of peace, I by no means pretend to have followed it with so implicit a devotion as to make sacrifices to it. I have never yielded a substantial right which I could assert, or submitted to a wrong which I could repel with a moral assurance of success . . . and I can allude to instances in which I should have deemed it criminal not to have hazarded both the public safety and my own, in a crisis of uncommon and adequate emergency, or in an occasion of dangerous example.' The singularly graceful literary style in which Hastings wrote justified his old master at Westminster School, who had wished him to devote his life to letters.

and irresolute character. When Dupleix was dreaming of a French Asiatic Empire at Pondicherri, the English at Madras saw nothing beyond their ledgers. Clive saved them on that occasion; and when, a few years later, peril again threatened them, they could do nothing for themselves, but insisted on his immediate return from Bengal to succour them. They were for ever sending plaintive accounts of their troubles to London. In 1770 they wrote to the directors that 'to give you a clear representation of the dangers and embarrassments through which we have been struggling . . . is a task beyond our abilities.' The next year it was 'with infinite concern the Committee observed that notwithstanding their repeated and earnest representations to the Court of Directors . . . we still find ourselves not only without orders, but without the least intimation of their opinion thereon.' They could do nothing without extraneous advice; and when by chance they made a move alone, they blundered. In the uncertain state of India in the eighteenth century, a crisis was certain sooner or later to confront every European settlement; but whenever one confronted Madras, the English Council there invariably proved themselves incompetent to deal with it.

It was through their egregious folly that war was provoked with Haidar Ali, Sultan of Mysore; and it was on their culpably defenceless presidency that there descended, in Burke's magnificent phrase, 'the black cloud that hung for a while on the declivities of the mountains, the menacing meteor which blackened all the horizon until it suddenly burst, and poured down the whole of its contents upon the plains of the Karnatic.'

Haidar Ali.

Some thirty years previously, when the fall of the Mughal Empire had given India over to anarchy, a Musalmán adventurer had begun to distinguish himself in the wars of the South. His ancestry was mean; his grandfather had been a wandering dervish, his father a petty revenue officer. He himself had received no educa-

tion ; he could not even read the alphabet. But as a soldier of fortune he made his way rapidly ; as a general, none could equal him. In the then condition of India, it was no great step from head of an army to ruler of a province, and from that again to autocrat of a kingdom ; and Haidar Ali, after having passed through these preliminary grades, in course of time became Sultan of Mysore.

What he had been ambitious enough to obtain he was clever enough to keep. A crowd of lesser men continued to struggle among themselves for other parts of India ; but few were able to touch Mysore while Haidar ruled it. He oppressed his people : but no minor parasites were allowed to fatten at their expense ; and on the whole he ruled firmly and well, and was looked up to by his subjects with respect, perhaps with affection.

It was this man whom the Government of Madras provoked to war. He had already fought not unsuccessfully with the English ; but some years previously, when the Marathas had invaded his dominions, he had sought an alliance with Madras ; and his overtures had been rejected. A little later, he had again opened negotiations for the same purpose ; and again he had been repulsed.

From that time, the Sultan of Mysore had looked to the French for aid. Intercourse became friendly between Haidar and the authorities at Pondicherri. French adventurers trained and led his troops ; the arms and military stores of Mysore were supplied by France. When war broke out between England and France, the feeble French settlement at Pondicherri was reduced at once ; and Haidar, as a matter of appearance, congratulated the British on their success. But he took care at the same time to declare that he would be offended if Mahé, the remaining French settlement on the opposite coast, was captured ; and he threatened that, if it were, he would invade the Karnatic.

His words were disregarded, and Mahé was taken by the

British. Burning with resentment, and with a keen memory of the continued refusal of the Madras Council to ally themselves with him, and with a yet keener recollection of agreements which they had broken, Haidar prepared for revenge.

He was now an old man; but there was no sign of age in his movements. He first made peace with his perpetual enemies, the Marathas. An alliance was concluded with his neighbour, the Nizam of Haidarábád. The two most powerful Musalmán powers of Southern India thus united, Haidar prepared for the attack. The army of Mysore had been steadily enlarged during the past two years, and it was now ready for immediate service. The military stores which he had obtained from France were requisitioned.

Part of the army was moved to the border of Mysore, where it looked down over the wild descent which led into the flat Karnatic beneath; and the road to one of the principal passes was already being cleared.

All these preparations were known to the English at Madras; of many they had been aware for some time. Yet nothing was done to protect the important British interests in the Karnatic. 'What can we do?' asked the Governor of the presidency feebly, 'we have no money, but we mean to assemble an army.'

The next day the news arrived that Porto Novo and the district within fifty miles of Madras had been plundered; that Haidar's army was a hundred thousand strong; that a corps of Frenchmen were among his auxiliaries.

And wherever the army of Haidar went, it brought ruin and destruction. The houses were fired, the crops destroyed; the people fled to the mountains and the forests. The whole of the Karnatic seemed about to be destroyed.

Nor was this all. A few days later Madras itself was threatened; and many of the English merchants took refuge in Fort St. George, for the country around was in the hands

of Haidar, and the sight of the burning villages in the vicinity inspired awful forebodings as to the fate of the capital.

Suddenly, however, Haidar determined to capture Arcot before attempting Madras; and he immediately attacked and took that fortress. Meanwhile the presidential government was in a miserable condition. They had no money, and the neighbouring princes pleaded poverty when a loan was desired. An army indeed there was; but the British officers were ignorant of Haidar's movements, while every act of theirs was conveyed to him at once by the natives. The troops were in two detachments; each was attacked separately by Haidar: both were defeated. One was destroyed; the other fled.

Nothing now lay between Madras and destruction. The English who were there were not the men to rise superior to their difficulties, and to organise victory out of defeat. With the exception of a few forts, which still offered resistance, the whole south of India was in the hands of Haidar Ali.

No help could be expected from England, for England was herself in sore straits; and, in any case, any help that might have been sent from Europe would have arrived too late. In Warren Hastings' emphatic expression, 'the Company's existence . . . vibrated to the edge of perdition, and it has at all times been suspended by a thread so fine that the touch of chance might break, or the breath of opinion dissolve it: and instantaneous will be its fall whenever it shall happen.' And it was Hastings, in fact, who again saved the Company at this crisis.

A swift ship carried the news of the Mysore outbreak from Madras to Calcutta; and within twenty-four hours the Governor-General of Bengal had thought out a complete new plan of policy, adapted to the altered condition of affairs. Every nerve must be strained to preserve the Karnatic for the empire. The Maratha War had been important; it was now only a secondary consideration. Fifteen lakhs of rupees,

and all the available troops of Bengal, were sent to Madras; some difficulty only occurring with the sepoys, whose religion did not permit them to travel by sea. Sir Philip Francis, indeed, raised objections in the Council Room: he would have sent only half the money, and no military aid at all. But the day when he could seriously embarrass Hastings was over; and his suggestions, which if carried out would inevitably have lost the Karnatic, were disregarded. But this was not all. The Governor of Fort St. George was evidently utterly incompetent; and Hastings, by a bold exercise of power, determined to suspend him. Sir Eyre Coote was despatched to take charge of all the operations against Haidar Ali.

Coote was now past his prime, and his constitution was undermined by disease; but he had still much of the great ability which he had shown at Wandewash. He reached Madras on 5th November 1780; and so little time had been lost by Hastings in organising relief that the French fleet which it had been feared would intercept the British transports had not yet arrived.

On 17th January 1781 Coote marched northwards, hoping to draw Haidar in pursuit. He succeeded; but Haidar, with considerable cunning, drew the English general further inland by threatening Cuddalur, and then swung round and interposed his army between Coote and the British base of action at Madras.

Coote retreated to Porto Novo, near the coast; but his position was now precarious in the extreme. His whole army was only six thousand sepoys and two thousand English, while Haidar was forty thousand strong. If Coote were defeated, the loss of Madras was certain; and even Hastings could not improvise another army to reconquer the Karnatic.

In these circumstances, the Sultan of Mysore expected an easy victory; and Coote determined to give battle. Indeed, he could do nothing else; and one who had been present as

a young man at Plassey would not fear to fight against odds, even though the army he had now to encounter was led by a very different man from the supine Nawab of Murshidábád. On 1st July 1781 the great battle of Porto Novo took place, and Haidar Ali was utterly defeated.

Coote followed up his successes by further attacks on the remnants of Mysorean power in the Karnatic; until, completely worn out, his health gave way, and he was forced to return to Calcutta. Even then he still wished to serve his country; and at the earliest possible moment, long indeed before he was fit for work, he went back again to Madras.

But although Coote was no more than fifty-seven years of age, the brave man's body was exhausted by his long and arduous life in the field; and in 1783, two days after his arrival at the southern capital, he died. Sir Eyre Coote was not, and would never have thought of placing himself, in the same rank held by men like Clive; but in the annals of our Indian Empire the victor of Wandewash and Porto Novo holds no inconspicuous place, as the military saviour on two distinct occasions of British power in the south.

In the meantime, Lord Macartney, the new Governor of Madras, had arrived; and overtures for peace were made to Haidar Ali. They were rejected; and in the words of the Sultan's reply we can see much of the reason for his bitter, but not unfounded, enmity against the British. 'The governors and sirdars who enter into treaties return after one or two years to Europe,' he wrote; 'and their acts and deeds become of no effect; fresh governors and sirdars introduce new considerations. Prior to your coming, when the Governor and Council of Madras had departed from their treaty of alliance and friendship, I sent to confer with them, and to ask the reason for such a breach of faith. The answer given was, that they who made those conditions had gone to Europe. You write that you have come with the sanction of the King and the Company to settle all matters, which gives me great

happiness. You, sir, are a man of wisdom, and comprehend all things. Whatever you may judge proper and best, that you will do. You mention that troops have arrived, and are daily arriving from Europe. Of this I have no doubt; I depend on the favour of God for my successes.' The incompetence of the Madras administration, the lack of continuity in their policy, the absence indeed of any real policy at all, the wretched nature of the excuses put forward for breaking their word, could not have been more forcibly exposed.

Nothing could bring Haidar Ali to trust in their professions again, for he had no reason to do so; and he continued the war, albeit without much success, till his death in 1782. Even then it did not end; Tipú, his son and heir, who had already helped his father against the English, continued the contest, assisted by fresh supplies from France. In the following year, however, peace was concluded between France and England, and Tipú was forced from now to depend upon his own resources; and the first Mysore War quickly drew to a close in 1784, a mutual restitution of all conquests being the basis of peace.

The long administration of Hastings was likewise drawing to a close; and the last few months during which he held office were quiet and uneventful, in strange contrast to the turmoil of the previous twelve years. There was peace in India; there was peace in Europe. Haidar Ali was dead; and there was no reason to fear any further attacks from the French. The opposition that now confronted Hastings in the Council at Calcutta was weak and ineffectual.

Retirement of Hastings, 1785.

At length, in the spring of 1785, he sailed from India, to the accompaniment of many marks of genuine sorrow from both the natives and the English: expecting to receive at home the honours and rewards he had earned by such splendid services, and to retire at last to that ancestral estate at

Daylesford, of whose acquisition he had dreamed since his childhood.

Daylesford indeed he acquired; but instead of being honoured, he was reviled by his countrymen. The burning words he addressed to Parliament when summoned to defend his actions and his policy in the East are eloquent of the bitterness which his reception caused him. 'I enlarged,' he said, 'and gave shape and consistency to the dominion you held there; I preserved it; I sent forth its armies with an effectual but economical hand, through unknown and hostile regions, to the support of your other possessions; to the retrieval of one from degradation and dishonour, and of the other from loss and subjection. I maintained the wars which were of your formation, or that of others, not of mine. . . . I gave you all: and you have rewarded me with confiscation, disgrace, and a life of impeachment.'

His Reward.

CHAPTER III

PARLIAMENT AND THE EAST INDIA COMPANY: 1772-98[1]

We have already seen that Parliament had, at various times, intervened in the affairs of the East India Company. On a strict interpretation of the letter of the law, the House of Commons had perhaps no constitutional right to touch on matters of this nature. The associations of adventurers received their charters from the Crown alone. Their business lay in foreign lands, and all foreign questions were, in a peculiar degree, the prerogative of the Crown. Neither the Tudors nor the Stuarts recognised the right of Parliament to intervene between the Crown and those to whom it had

[1] Authorities.—As before, with the additional parliamentary records of the time. Especially important are the biographies of Clive, Hastings, Cornwallis, and the British statesmen of the period. The pamphlets on Indian affairs are again useful. Hunter and Mill for India itself.

granted charters: nevertheless, as a matter of policy, or convenience, or sometimes under protest, they allowed it.

On its side Parliament had no doubt of its right of interference. A charter to trade conferred a monopoly of trade in a particular district: and the right of the Crown to grant monopolies was one on which the Commons kept a jealous eye. A charter to colonise presupposed the right of the Crown to govern the colony founded, with or without representative institutions; in nearly every case it stipulated that the Crown should receive certain definite or indefinite sums in return for the privilege and protection, nominal or real, which went with the charter. The extension of the British dominions overseas to any large extent would therefore have enriched the Crown considerably, and might conceivably have rendered it independent of the home Parliament: hence the interest with which the Commons followed the question of charters and monopolies.

But after the execution of Charles I. all the functions of the Crown devolved on Parliament; and at the restoration of the monarchy it was impossible for things to revert to their previous position. From that time, therefore, the right of Parliament to intervene in the affairs of the chartered and proprietary companies was unquestioned; even more evident was its right to revise the charters by which the Crown granted privileges, and to determine for how long a period those privileges should be renewed.

For a century little more was aimed at. The imperial policy of Cromwell had thrown the glamour of imperialism over many of the acts of his Parliaments: but the reaction came immediately after his death. From that time the debates on the renewal of charters turned mainly on the amount that could be obtained from the trading companies for the relief of home taxation; a sort of income-tax levied in advance on speculative profits, that frequently it is difficult to distinguish from political blackmail.

A change of view is first noticeable in the time of the elder Pitt. The Empire of India was now falling into the hands of England, or rather into the hands of a trading company that was bound to use its position primarily for the purpose of paying dividends. It was a situation unparalleled in the history of the world; although endowed with the privileges of rule, the East India Company did not recognise the responsibilities; nor did Parliament for some time consider it necessary to take any steps to reform the government of India.

Gradually, however, the feeling grew stronger that some more efficacious system of control was necessary; and, as might be expected, Pitt, the great imperial statesman of the age, was the first to discuss the matter. In 1760 he already thought the government of India 'the greatest of all objects, according to my view of great.' He meditated deeply over the problem, which seemed to resolve itself into the question, whether conquests never contemplated by a charter should be deemed an essential part of that charter.

Unfortunately, the mysterious illness which for a time clouded his intellect prevented him from taking any action; but when the renewal of the Company's charter was again debated in 1773, he at once showed his interest. In the letter on the subject that has been preserved, he puts his view of the case clearly: 'I always conceived that there is in substantial justice a mixed right to the territorial revenues between the State and the Company as joint captors; the State equitably entitled to the larger share as largest contributor in the acquisition. . . . Nor can the Company's share, when ascertained, be considered as private property: but in trust for the public purpose of the defence of India and the extension of trade; never in any case to be portioned out in dividends to the extinction of trade.' At this time Burke also showed his interest in oriental matters, and we have already seen that an Act to regulate affairs in India

passed through Parliament in spite of the protests of the directors of the Company.

But the great storm was still to come, a storm in comparison to which the outcry that took place over the misgovernment which Clive was sent out to check was merely a passing thundercloud on a summer day.

Parliament and Clive, 1773.

During the debates on the India Bill the name of Clive had often been called in question, and the part he had taken in the government of India was referred to censoriously by many members. On him was visited all the wrath which had gradually been accumulating against the whole body of Anglo-Indians for several years. The nabobs, as the latter were commonly called in England, were for many reasons a most unpopular class of men.[1] They did not generally come of high family, yet their wealth enabled them to outshine the heads of old county houses. That wealth could buy them everything save breeding and respect; and they attempted to cover the deficiency, after the manner of the upstart all the world over, by insolence. Accustomed to command in India, they assumed an overbearing tone at home. Their demeanour naturally roused the furious resentment of all those particles of society which they had displaced; the aspiring snob and the lofty patrician were for once allied in detesting a common foe. And these critics were joined by a type of man whom modern England to her cost knows too well: we may be sure that, among the enemies of the nabobs, there were not lacking those who are meanly envious of the more conspicuous or more fortunate in life than themselves, and whose sole delight seems to be to

[1] As were also their sons at Oxford University, as is pointed out in Godley's *Oxford in the Eighteenth Century*. Many writers have ascribed the corruption of eighteenth-century England to the evil influence of the wealthy Anglo-Indians; but it must be remembered that the nabobs were after all a limited class, and that the manufacturers at home were making money at least as rapidly at this time. And it is not invariably true that wealth is put to bad uses, even by those who have amassed it more quickly than their less fortunate or more honest neighbours.

traduce and to besmirch those of their countrymen who have performed great public services overseas.

It began to be whispered that the enormous wealth of the Anglo-Indians had been obtained by extortion and tyranny of the most cruel kind: and the nabobs at once found enrolled among their opponents such men as the orator Burke, whose pure soul was filled with a passion for justice to the weak, and the poet Cowper, whose terrible indictment of the iniquity of the English in India seems directly inspired by that divine teacher who bade men be merciful to the poor and helpless.

The storm centred on Clive: for he was the chief of all the nabobs. And to the revilements of his countrymen at home he found were now added the curses of those whom he had balked of making a fortune in India. His good and his evil acts alike told against him.

Every item of his conduct was investigated by Parliament with malignant care: 'I am sure,' Clive once exclaimed, 'if I had any sore places about me, they would have been found; they have probed me to the bottom; no lenient plasters have been applied to heal, no, they were all of the blister kind.' After the trial he said bitterly, and with truth, that he had been examined like a common sheep-stealer; but a sense of compassion for his wrongs had already turned feeling in his favour. When the direct vote of censure was moved in the House, the previous question was put and carried; and while his excesses were not glossed over, it was resolved unanimously 'that Robert Lord Clive did at the same time render great and meritorious services to his country.'

The verdict was a just one: but it brought no peace to Clive. He rusted in inactivity; he, whose whole manhood had been passed in conflict, could not exist in luxurious idleness. The strange melancholy of his youth again began to prey upon him: and a few months later he died by his own hand, having only just entered his fiftieth year. The ignorant and the superstitious at once

Death of Clive, 1774.

seized on the event as a sign that the Devil had come by his own; and there were even some good men who so far forgot their religion as to suggest that the just retribution of God had overtaken the oppressor.

The war of pamphlets attacking and defending the East India Company went on unceasingly. The rising newspaper press of the day joined in the debate. The evil genius of Sir Philip Francis returned from Asia to add acrimony to the controversy. Statesmen were meanwhile occupied in devising schemes of better government for the Indian possessions of Britain. The mantle of Pitt fell on his son. The loss of the American colonies made men fear the loss of the Indian Empire; and the news of the growing power of Haidar Ali gave countenance to the fear. But until the charter of the Company was near expiry, nothing could be done; and Warren Hastings was still ruling firmly and wisely in the East.

Indian Controversy, 1781.

At length, in 1780, negotiations were begun between the directors and the imperial treasury for a renewal of the monopoly. There were many difficulties to be encountered; and the two old questions still remained. To whom did the territory in the East belong, and what amount should the Company pay for its exclusive commercial privileges?

A compromise was effected, however, and the charter was renewed for a time; but, while everything appeared to be going smoothly, various complaints arrived from the British in India as to the powers possessed by the Supreme Court of Judicature. In deference to these, two committees were appointed, which afterwards investigated the whole state of oriental affairs; and of those committees the most conspicuous and the most laborious member was Edmund Burke.

Legislation again became inevitable. Feeling raged high. Dundas, one of the most implacable enemies of Warren Hastings, demanded his recall; and by his words recommending the appointment of Cornwallis as Governor-General, he

insinuated a gross slander on the existing holder of that office. 'Here,' said Dundas of his nominee, 'is no broken fortune to be mended; no beggarly mushroom kindred to be provided for; no crew of hungry followers gaping to be gorged!'

But the Bill which he put forward was rightly looked upon as too extreme, and the Ministry itself took the Indian problem in hand. Fox introduced a Bill, which was unacceptable to all but his own party followers; and good in many points though it was, it was considered solely from the party point of view, which was then an even greater curse than now in British politics.

The only voice which raised the debates to a higher level was that of Burke; and his magnificent eloquence, which even in the cold silence of print can still stir the blood more than a century afterwards, was then employed in the first of those splendid efforts on behalf of our Indian fellow-subjects which are perhaps his most enduring title to fame. His speech was, he said, 'The fruit of much meditation, the result of the observation of near twenty years. . . . This business cannot be indifferent to our fame. It will turn out matter of great disgrace or great glory to the whole British nation. I am therefore a little concerned to perceive the spirit and temper in which the debate has been all along pursued. It is not right, it is not worthy of us, to depreciate the value, to degrade the majesty, of this grave deliberation of policy and empire. If we are not able to devise some means of governing India well, which will not of necessity become the means of governing Great Britain ill, a ground is laid for their eternal separation.' A lengthy indictment of the East India Company followed. 'We have sold,' said Burke, 'the blood of millions of men for the base consideration of money. Through all that vast extent of country there is not a man who eats a mouthful of rice but by permission of the East India Company; yet there is not

The Idealism of Burke.

a single prince, state, or potentate, great or small, with whom they have come in contact, whom they have not sold. There is not a single treaty they have ever made which they have not broken. Every rupee of profit made by an Englishman is lost for ever to India. England has erected no churches, no hospitals, no palaces, no schools; England has built no bridges, made no high roads, cut no navigations, dug out no reservoirs. Every other conqueror has left some monument behind him; were we to be driven out of India this day, nothing would remain to tell that it had been possessed during the inglorious period of our dominion by anything better than the urang-utang or the tiger. . . . There is not left one man of property and substance, not one landholder, not one banker, not one merchant, nor one even of those who usually perish last, the *ultimum moriens* in a ruined state, not one farmer of revenue.'

The speech was disfigured by many gross exaggerations: the Company's rule was at least an improvement on those degenerate successors of the Mughal who had given India over to anarchy; and Burke made no mention whatever of the administrative reforms of Hastings.[1]

But in the main the charges were true; and the importance of Burke's speech is that it laid down for the first time, as an undeniable proposition, the principle that it was a national duty to see that the natives of our oriental dependency were not oppressed by their conquerors. If the East India Company, in short, was responsible for India, England was responsible for the East India Company.

In this speech, too, may be found the first outline of that

[1] This speech, indeed, showed Burke at his best; at his worst he was merely an abusive fanatic. As Mr. Sichel points out in his brilliant *Life of Sheridan*, Burke was rebuked by Pitt in 1784 for calling Warren Hastings 'Haman Dowlah,' and there are other instances of his passionate and rhetorical distortions in his dealings with Indian politics. To the end of his life he refused to see anything but evil in the character of the great Governor-General. But this was not the only case in which Burke showed that the faculty of calm and impartial judgment was utterly alien to his nature.

policy of social and industrial improvement in the East which has been the glory of our dominion there during the nineteenth century. The world, as Burke said at another time, 'saw one of the races of the North-West cast into the heart of Asia new manners, new doctrines, new institutions'; and though England had as yet done little to justify her conquests, the beginnings of better things were at hand.

The Bill introduced by Fox was rejected, not so much by the opinion of Parliament, as by the direct influence of the king; and William Pitt the younger, the new Prime Minister, brought forward a somewhat similar measure. It was founded more on compromise than the scheme of Fox, who had not understood the strength of the East India Company, and the influence its directors possessed in Parliament: but its principle was much the same. All commercial business was to be carried on as before by the Company, whose chartered rights were thus untouched; but the whole conduct of political matters was placed under a Board of Control, which was formed of members selected from the Privy Council of Great Britain. The Board had power to approve or annul the acts of the Company, and the President of the Board became practically a new Secretary of State in Parliament for the Indian Department.

The India Bills, 1783-4.

In this way the government of India fell to the British Parliament; the commerce of India was preserved to its original owners. So great was the power of Pitt as Premier that the Bill passed without serious opposition; and the system of double government thus instituted lasted, with one important change, until after the Mutiny of 1857.

It was anomalous, but on the whole it answered well; and the seventy-three years during which it continued form the second great division of British Indian polity. In the first, the Company had been supreme. In the second, the Company and the Crown had joint control. In the third, the Company ceased to exist, and the Crown alone was responsible.

During the course of the protracted debates on Indian affairs many of the acts of Warren Hastings had been severely condemned by enemies both public and private. His conduct had been censured by a vote of the House of Commons. Dundas had attacked him with the virulence of which he was a master. Francis had done all in his power to pay back old scores. Burke had declaimed in tones of thunder against the tyranny and extortion of the Governor-General. But imperial affairs were too critical to permit of the recall of Hastings at that moment. At length, however, in 1785 he returned.

The Trial of Hastings, 1788-95.

It cannot be denied there was a strong, and to some extent a well-founded feeling of indignation against him. But he had also a great body of fervent admirers. The general public, who had no particular reason for taking sides on Indian questions, seem to have recognised that he had committed many wrongs; but against this they set off, and with justice, the fact that he had upheld the English name in the East during a time of storm and stress.

In all probability no steps to impeach him would have been taken, had not his agent in Parliament, the inept Major Scott, challenged Burke to bring forward a motion of censure that had already been threatened. Thus attacked, Burke had no option but to justify himself. He replied, and founded his indictment chiefly on the Rohilla War, the Chait Sinh affair, and the ill-treatment of the Begams of Oudh; actions which he characterised, with even more than his customary vehemence of language, as 'the damned and damnable proceedings of a judge in hell.' On the first charge Hastings was absolved by the House of Commons, chiefly on the ground that his conduct therein had already been censured; but he was impeached on the others.

The trial began early in the next year, 1788. Against Hastings were ranged the greatest orators of the age; Burke, Sheridan, and Fox vied with each other in depicting the

enormities of which the great Governor-General had been guilty. But they knew little of legal procedure; and their speeches, which were full of the splendid rhetoric of which each of those great speakers were masters, were equally full of the most reckless exaggerations.

The lawyers, and perhaps the balance of the arguments, were on the side of Warren Hastings; but what was even more on his side was the extraordinary duration of the trial. The hearing of the charges against him extended over seven years; and even then it was only by the prosecutors withdrawing many of the counts that the end was reached. The public interest had been enormous at the beginning of the proceedings; but long before the trial had run half its course the world was weary of it.[1] Sympathy began to be given to Hastings, for justice seemed to degenerate into persecution, as the dilatory proceedings dragged on indefinitely. At last, in 1795, the decision was pronounced. Acquittal on all the charges was a foregone conclusion.

There must have been many at the trial who drew a parallel between Clive and Hastings. Both had gone out as lads to India, in much the same circumstances. Both had been in the same employment, and had risen from the lowest to the highest positions. Both held a position of immense power, and served their country well. Both committed great faults, and both had their conduct tried by enemies on their return. Both were honourably acquitted.

But there the resemblance ends. Clive was wayward and passionate, and a prey to suicidal mania. Hastings was calm and thoughtful, and able to keep steadily in the same path for many years together. At his acquittal he was already older than Clive had been at his death; yet Hastings

[1] And so apparently was one of the prosecutors. Mr. Sichel relates that: 'Even at the end of 1788, so wearied was Sheridan of the impetuous tempers of Burke that he told the Duchess of Devonshire in jest how much he wished that Warren Hastings would run away, and Burke after him.'

lived in tranquillity another twenty-three years, on those historic lands of his ancestors at Daylesford which he had so long coveted, where he indulged the quiet pursuits of an English country gentleman, and endeavoured, not very successfully, to cultivate at home some of the products native to the tropical regions of the earth.

The likeness and the contrast between the work of the two men in India is striking. The career of Clive may be compared to the course of a mountain torrent, which carries all before it in one impetuous rush; that of Hastings to the steadily flowing river of the lowlands, less picturesque perhaps, but with far more real power and force: and as the torrent is the beginning of the river, so were the conquests of Clive the foundation of the administrative and general policy of Hastings. The one was the complement of the other; alone neither would have been permanent.

With the close of the great trial the interest that had been excited in Indian affairs throughout England died away, as the storm of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars distracted the attention of Europe. Asiatic affairs, in fact, remained a thing apart from the general politics of the western world; and only those who were directly concerned with the East knew much of the advance of our empire there. But, despite the terrible burden of the contest with France, there was no cessation for any length of time of the efforts to consolidate and extend the English power in India.

Cornwallis, 1786-93.

The immediate successor of Warren Hastings in India was Macpherson, a man who had risen from the humble position of purser on a mercantile vessel to be adviser to the Nawab of Arcot, and eventually a senior Member of Council. His rule was merely intermediate, and was marked by no events of any importance.

He was followed, in September 1786, by Lord Cornwallis, a statesman who proved himself worthy to rank among the

greatest of those whom England has given to India. As commander of the British troops in America during the Imperial Civil War a year or two before, he had been unsuccessful; as Governor-General of India, however, he more than retrieved the reputation which he lost in the capitulation at Yorktown.[1]

At first, indeed, he was unwilling to accept the post offered to him. He saw the virulent attacks that were being made on Warren Hastings; he had himself not been held free from blame by popular opinion for the crowning disaster of the American War; and he shrank, as many a sensitive man would have shrunk in a similar position, from the possibility of a second failure and its inevitable consequences.

He was in no mood, he said, to risk being 'disgraced to all eternity' in attempting ineffectually 'to fight nabob princes, his own Council, and the supreme Government, whatever it may be'; and he refused the post. It was some time before the entreaties of the English Ministers prevailed: but at length, 'much against his will and with grief of heart,' as he confessed, he accepted the supreme control of Indian affairs and sailed for the East.

His arrival found Bengal in a disturbed and restless state. Macpherson had already described the time as 'a season of peculiar difficulty, when the close of a ruinous war, and the relaxed habits of the service, had left all the armies in arrear, and the presidencies in disorder.' According to the much overdrawn accounts that had been sent home, the public distress had never been so pressing as at that moment; and certainly Macpherson himself did nothing to relieve it. Indeed, even his short period of rule had been far from satisfactory. Many of the old abuses had begun to appear again; and his successor took occasion to remark, in an early despatch, that the British name in India

Unrest in India.

[1] For the campaigns of Cornwallis in America, see vol. iii. bk. ix. chap. iii.

had now 'no authority, and the grossest frauds were daily committed before their faces; their whole conduct, and all their pretensions to economy, except in the reduction of salaries, were a scene of delusion.'

When Cornwallis landed, therefore, in a country to whose problems he was altogether a stranger, it was not to take up the reins of a settled government; and his hands were still further tied by the instructions he had received before leaving England.

The parliamentary Board of Control and the directors of the East India Company had both assumed that the collection and the amount of the revenue were the most important questions in Indian administration. In a sense perhaps they were right, looking at India from the point of view that was held by everybody at that day except Edmund Burke; and most certainly they did not err in discovering that the revenue stood on a very unsatisfactory footing. All over the country payments were in arrears; in some parts they were as much as four years behind; in many others the sums collected had fallen short of expectations.

The Bengal Revenue.

It had therefore been determined to place the Indian revenue on a permanent basis. The first assessment was to be confined to a period of ten years; but after that time a lasting settlement was to be arrived at. With the duty of introducing this new system was Cornwallis charged; and he was to be guided, not by 'abstract theories drawn from other countries, or applicable to a different state of things, but a consideration of the existing manners and usages of the people.'

It was easy to give directions from London; but the new Governor-General had not been long in Calcutta before he found it impossible to carry them out. It had been taken for granted that the English in India were already in possession of sufficient information as to the economic condition of the provinces they ruled, to fix the assessment almost imme-

diately at an equitable rate. So far, however, was this from being the case, that nobody could say definitely whether the country could pay more, or whether it was already taxed too highly. All that was certainly known were the amounts that had previously been collected.

In this difficulty Cornwallis took the only course that was fair both to the people and their rulers; but it was a course upon which a lesser man would have refused to embark. He disregarded the orders he had received, and sent home a despatch giving his reasons for doing so. Annual settlements of the revenue were introduced for the time being; in the meantime all the information that could be gathered as to the resources of India was obtained and placed before him.

The result was seen in the despatch sent home by Cornwallis on 2nd August 1789. After three years of exhaustive investigation, he was now ready with a scheme for the permanent settlement of the Bengal revenue. The assessment of the country was fixed in perpetuity. It was still left in the hands of the zamindari, or collectors, to receive the revenue from the ryots, or cultivators, as before, and to pay it over to the Government; but the rights of the former were elevated into something very near those of a landlord, while the latter became in effect little more than tenants. Cornwallis appears to have had in mind, as was inevitable in a man of aristocratic upbringing, the system of land tenure prevailing in England: but great as this fault was—and we shall see in a subsequent chapter that his scheme eventually failed—the permanent settlement was at least a step forward from the old haphazard method of revenue collection. It introduced, what had hitherto always been lacking, an element of certainty in Indian finance; it standardised a principle, where before was merely chance, and very often extortion.

The Permanent Settlement, 1789.

Further than this, it paved the way for another urgent

reform. The functions of collector of revenue and president of the local courts of law had previously pertained to the same official: and the effect of this was to unite the advocate and the judge in one person. A more direct incentive to tyranny can hardly be conceived; and although Cornwallis in his original instructions was commanded to preserve the system, he abolished it after a lengthy trial had convinced him of its injustice. The complete criminal jurisdiction was given to Europeans, and the collector of revenue had from this time no connection with either judicature or police.

But in spite of the care which had been taken in the compilation of the revenue statistics, they proved very faulty in the actual work of administration. Under the new scheme, whatever advantages the Government and the collectors of revenue derived from it, the cultivators suffered. Within twenty years the position of the latter was described as desperate, and it was seen that the permanent settlement would have to be revised throughout. Unfortunately this was deferred from year to year, and the rights of the cultivators were not secured to them until after the Mutiny in 1859.

Whether Cornwallis would have discovered and remedied the defects of his own system, had the opportunity been vouchsafed him, remains a question. But he, like Warren Hastings, was interrupted in his schemes of reform by a call to arms. Haidar Ali was dead; Tipú, his son, reigned in his stead. And Tipú was still burning with resentment at the defeats that had been inflicted on his father, and the heavy losses which the late war had brought on the kingdom of Mysore. In his way he governed well, and his people were prosperous and contented during at least the earlier part of his reign, thus furnishing a humiliating contrast to the misery of the neighbouring British province of the Karnatic. But Tipú was above all else ambitious to extend his territory, and to exterminate the alien rulers of India.

The Second Mysore War, 1791-2.

To accomplish the latter end, he was quite prepared to see other aliens in their place. He invited the terrible Afgháns to descend from their fastnesses upon the north, and to co-operate with him in driving out the English; and though his project fortunately came to nothing, he remained hopeful till the last that the French would yet appear in India as conquerors, and assist him against those enemies with whom his father had grappled in vain, and with whom the major part of his own life was to be spent in warring.

For some years after the close of the first Mysore War, in 1784, there seemed no likelihood, however, that the treaty between Tipú and the English would be broken. The Sultan was indeed a turbulent neighbour, who was continually interfering in the affairs of the smaller states of Southern India, over which the English claimed a certain amount of control: but the opinion generally prevailed that he would do nothing actively hostile without French aid; and that aid he could not hope to obtain, since France and England were at peace.

But in the very year, 1790, in which Cornwallis expressed this opinion, and even suggested to Tipú that commissioners should be appointed on either side to settle all questions in dispute, the latter attacked Travancore, a state under British protection, without previous provocation.

The Governor-General at once made known his intention of exacting full reparation for the outrage; and treaties of offensive alliance were concluded by him with Haidarábád and those recent foes of the British, the Maratha princes.

Tipú, alarmed by the formidable enemies his wanton deed had provoked, attempted to excuse the invasion of Travancore as an unauthorised irruption of his army, and suggested that the English should appoint one or two trusty persons to negotiate. But Cornwallis was not to be deceived. It would have compromised the dignity of the British name to have sent ambassadors to Tipú; it was his place to send them to us.

But although the Sultan of Mysore subsequently offered to do so, in order to 'remove the dust by which the upright mind of the General had been obscured'; and although the ever-pacific presidency of Madras believed that he 'had no intention to break with the Company,' Cornwallis saw more clearly that to delay the war would merely give Tipú the opportunity of strengthening his army, without lessening his enmity.[1] Madras was severely censured by the Governor-General for disobeying his command to prepare for war: and in the following year, 1791, Cornwallis himself took the field, with a display of pomp and power, designed to impress the natives, such as neither Clive nor Coote had ever been able to show.

Tipú had appealed to France for aid, and even waited at Pondicherri for the troops which he imagined must eventually come. But his request and his presents had both been laughed at in the court of Louis XVI.; and the Sultan of Mysore turned back disappointed to his own dominions to fight his battle alone.

His early operations against the British were, however, successful. The Madras army, which had marched against him, did nothing; and the activity of the Governor of Bombay, General Abercromby, who conquered the Malabar coast with ease, did not compensate for the failure of the former.

At length Cornwallis took the supreme direction of the

[1] I have an uneasy feeling that if the ghost of the unfortunate Tipú were suddenly to confront me at my desk, he might be able to prove that this war was fastened on him against his will by Cornwallis. The Sultan of Mysore certainly did his best to conciliate the Governor-General when he saw that matters were serious; and it is at least possible that Cornwallis seized a favourable opportunity to injure one whom he knew would never be a friend of the British, but whom it did not suit at the moment to become a declared enemy. But this question, like many other disputed points in history, can never be definitely settled; for nearly all our evidence comes from the victors, and the only decisive testimony would be the conscience of the defeated Sultan. It is a legal maxim that one cannot libel the dead—a maxim that seems invented for the express benefit of historians—but if one could call up spirits from the vasty deep, and examine them as to their actions when they were alive, a good deal that is now accepted as the truth would have to be thrown overboard.

war. He arrived without opposition at Bangalore, aided less by his own qualities as a commander than by Tipú's remissness as a foe; for the latter had suddenly bethought himself of his seraglio in that city, and returned with all speed to rescue his womenfolk.

The Sultan had thereby made a bad blunder, and Bangalore was soon in the hands of the British troops. But from that moment the fortune of the campaign was reversed. Cornwallis failed to effect a junction with the army of Haidarábád; and although Tipú declined a proffered battle, and the British general prepared for the siege of Seringapatam, the capital of Mysore, he was suddenly checked.

There was an utter failure of the British equipment, due to lack of foresight; the cattle and provisions were lost, and the invading army was compelled to retreat in serious danger. It fell in with the Marathas, but for the time these allies were of little use, requiring a loan before they would consent to fight: and at length Cornwallis was forced to open negotiations with Tipú.

But the Sultan, though willing enough to treat, was now flushed with victory, and suggested that the British army should return to its own territory before he could think of peace. The assumption of superiority was repudiated by Cornwallis; and, fresh supplies having arrived, the combined armies of the British and Marathas marched on Seringapatam.

The district between Bangalore and the capital of Mysore was of an extraordinarily difficult nature for an army to traverse. The country was one of hills and precipices. A dense jungle stretched the whole way, which was aggravated by the artificial thickets of bamboos that had been planted in various places. At intervals there were forts, which were manned by the Sultan's most devoted servants. 'I have eaten Tipú's salt for twenty years,' cried the captain of one of these when summoned to surrender, 'and will not give up my post till you first take Seringapatam.'

Almost every fort had to be bombarded until a breach was made in its walls, and then taken by assault; at least one stronghold resisted three days' continual cannonade. And when one fort was stormed and captured, a path had to be cut in the jungle, over rocks and through the undergrowth, before the heavy artillery could be dragged forward another mile or two towards the next. The labour was immense; but, by the beginning of February 1792, the British lines of communication were perfect, and Cornwallis appeared before Seringapatam.

The capital of Mysore, in which Tipú had entrenched himself, lies on a large island in the middle of a river. A network of bamboo and a prickly hedge formed a useful rampart against attack, even after the river had been crossed; and there was, in addition, a strong fortress to which the defenders could withdraw if closely pressed.

Tipú possessed some five thousand cavalry and between forty and fifty thousand infantry; and though his personal operations against the English had hitherto been generally feeble, he did not believe that they would be able to capture Seringapatam. It was his aim to weary them with a long and fruitless siege, until the coming of the monsoon should force them to withdraw; and since this stratagem had been successfully employed by his father in an earlier campaign some years before, Tipú, whose qualities as a military commander were certainly less brilliant than those of Haidar Ali, thought he could not do better than imitate a plan whose value had already been proved.

But Cornwallis was not deterred by the formidable appearance of Seringapatam. He made a sudden and daring attack on the night of 6th February; and although the native allies of the British were aghast at the boldness of the plan, and though Tipú's troops fought with great bravery, they could not resist the onslaught. By four o'clock the next afternoon the city was captured, and siege was then immedi-

ately laid to the fortress. A firm resistance was still made by the Sultan; but it was hopeless to attempt to hold out, and, on the 24th, peace was concluded.

The Mysorean soldiery continued to fire for a time, in order to appear to be the last to give up the fight; but this piece of barbarian bravado was of no effect. Cornwallis could despise such empty bombast, and he issued an order to his men to show moderation in the hour of victory, and to 'refrain from the use of any kind of insulting expression towards an enemy now subdued and humbled.'

The command was obeyed; but it was more difficult to draw up a treaty which, while satisfying the Marathas and the Nizam of Haidarábád, should secure to the British the just fruits of victory, and yet leave Tipú a reasonable amount of territory as Sultan of Mysore.

There was no intention of deposing him, for, once his power was checked, and he was forced to acknowledge the might of the ruling race, Cornwallis thought Tipú would be a useful factor in preserving that balance of power among the native states which was still the basis of the East India Company's policy. The events of the next few years proved that nothing could quell Tipú's enmity but death; but at the time the treaty of 1792 seemed sufficiently drastic to prevent him from causing further trouble.

He was forced to cede half his territories among the allies, to give up two of his eldest sons to the British as hostages, and to pay the enormous indemnity of three crores and thirty lakhs of rupees. The British share of the dominions thus acquired was the province of Mysore on the Karnatic frontier, the district surrounding Dindigul, and the Malabar coast.

A year after the close of the second Mysore War Cornwallis returned to England, and was succeeded as Governor-General by Sir John Shore, who had been instrumental in drawing up the greater part of the permanent settlement of Bengal. A high-

Sir John Shore, 1793-8.

minded and blameless statesman, Shore's attention was directed mainly to the internal administration of the British Indian provinces. He seldom interfered in the affairs of the independent states; and the five years of his rule being generally quiet and uneventful, he was able to continue undisturbed the work of reform which he had initiated under the guidance of Cornwallis.

The Results of Parliamentary Government.

When Shore retired in 1798, a little more than a quarter of a century had elapsed since the Regulating Act had been passed, and more than ten years since the government of India had been divided between the East India Company and the British Parliament. It was therefore by that time possible to see in some degree how the new system of divided ministerial and corporative control would work. That there had been some disadvantages in the dual authority was but natural. Cornwallis found himself hampered at times by the restrictions which had been placed on the contraction of alliances and the signature of treaties with the native powers; and it would have been a serious difficulty had he not cut the Gordian knot by occasionally disregarding the law on this point. In the troubled years which were to come, when Wellesley was at the head of affairs, it was often impossible to wait for the decision of the British Cabinet Ministers on every question of internal Indian politics, especially since neither the Parliamentary Secretary of State for India nor the directors of the East India Company in London could be so well informed of the necessities of the situation as the man on the spot; and, in addition, the time required for communicating between London and Calcutta was so long that the position might have altered entirely before the decision of the authorities in London could have reached the Governor-General in Calcutta. Wellesley, therefore, in this matter followed the action of Cornwallis.

Another disadvantage was the infusion of British party politics into the discussion of Indian affairs in Parliament;

but this was not a new evil. The examination of Clive and the impeachment of Warren Hastings had both been dictated at least as much by the claims of party as by consideration for the welfare of the people of India. The discussions and voting on the India Bills had been exclusively on party lines. And during the second Mysore War, Fox had found it consistent with patriotism to indulge in an attack of wild rhetoric on Cornwallis for his alliance with the Marathas and the Nizam of Haidarábád; it was, said Fox, a plundering confederacy for the purpose of extirpating a lawful prince, the expedient of a wicked government in a barbarous age; the progress of civilisation had rendered men ashamed of such alliances in Europe, but Britain still resorted to them in Asia. His oratory, however, fell on deaf ears; the war was popular in England, and the Government carried the day against the opposition.[1]

While these drawbacks to the new system were obvious, they were held in check by the general good sense of the nation, and, in part, by the indifference it was about to show towards Indian affairs; and they were more than offset by the advantages which parliamentary control had brought. The reforms of Cornwallis and Shore, though far from perfect, were at least steps towards better things; and it may be doubted whether they would have been introduced had British India remained solely under Company rule. Warren Hastings was as anxious to improve the administration of Bengal as Cornwallis; but he was prevented by the insistent

[1] That party spirit should run high within the walls of the House of Commons when Indian affairs were discussed will not appear wonderful to those who remember the political factions of the times; but it is curious to find that the people outside, who condemned Fox's India Bill, shouted 'No Grand Mogul, no India tyrant!' at the offending Whigs. They may not have understood exactly who the Grand Mogul was, or where he reigned; but most intelligent men had a roughly accurate idea of recent events in India. And although one of the characters in *She Stoops to Conquer* remarks that 'I no more trouble my head about Heyder Ally or Ally Cawn than about Ally Croaker,' the politics and finances of the East India Company, both in Leadenhall Street and in India, were one of the recognised topics of general conversation in England, as any of the memoirs of the later eighteenth century will attest.

demand of the Company's directors for money, while Cornwallis was, to a certain extent, able to disregard their wishes.

Again, the directors would have objected, and, in fact, they did object, to the policy of expansion which was about to be initiated by Wellesley; under parliamentary control, however, their complaints were useless.

CHAPTER IV

THE FORWARD POLICY: 1798-1805[1]

The first thirteen years after the return of Warren Hastings to England were, in a military sense, generally uneventful. The next seven were filled with continual wars. The whole period of twenty years may be summed up as that in which the two distinct types of policy which have since characterised the British dominion in Asia first became strongly marked. Both have been rightly called the forward

[1] Authorities.—Mill and Hunter. The former's *History of British India* closes with the year 1805. In spite of its cold, unsympathetic tone, and its prejudice against the East India Company and British policy in India, it is a valuable work. But it is a thousand pities that Hunter did not live to complete his great history, which would have superseded all others. The original authorities for this period are the indispensable despatches of Wellesley and Wellington, and the technical military works in which the history of the wars is told. Napoleon's scheme of striking at India through Egypt is thoroughly investigated by Thiers; the importance of the idea, and its effect in shaping our Asiatic policy, has perhaps hardly been sufficiently remarked by English historians. The Indian tracts and pamphlets that were published in England become from now for some time of small value: the trial of Warren Hastings had exhausted popular interest at home; there were no obvious reasons for attacking the Company on political grounds any more, since Parliament had practically taken over the administration; and, above all, while England was occupied with a life and death struggle in Europe, she could pay little attention to Asia. In consequence, we find that the discussion of Indian affairs began to be the province of experts, and from about this time Eastern problems were generally lifted above the sphere of party. The publications of the nineteenth century dealing with India were generally utilitarian and technical, and although they were controversial, they were so in quite a different sense from those of the eighteenth.

policy by those responsible for them. Each has been necessary at various times, and it says much for the credit of our Indian administration that the men in authority have generally chosen the path of conquest or the path of peace correctly, as the occasion of their age demanded.

The forward policy, from the military standpoint, has consisted in the extension of the British power in India by war and conquest. That policy has enlarged our frontiers till they have reached the Himalayas in the north and have stretched to the coast all round the vast peninsula. It has been the source of a thousand brilliant exploits by our armies ; it has brought fame and reputation to many a rising soldier. And sometimes, but not often, it has been checked by a terrible disaster.

The forward policy of the civilian service has had no such picturesque adjuncts to its fame. It has been concerned with the details of administrative work, with the reform of Indian law, with the settlement of the land system. It has had to inaugurate a general scheme of education, to stop popular abuses that had the custom of centuries of ignorance at their back. It has had to foresee the wants of modern India by encouraging industry, by constructing irrigation works, canals, and railways, by enlarging the forest area of the country. And before it could do this it had first to create itself, and to evolve that tradition of unobtrusive, self-sacrificing, and often inadequately paid labour which has made the British Indian Civil Service without a parallel in the world, but which has allowed so few of its members to found a name for themselves.

By a combination of the two policies the British have governed India. Our presence in Asia rests in the last resort upon the sword ; the justification of our presence there is the civil administration. To depend upon force alone would be to own ourselves without an ideal of government save that of force ; to depend upon civilian rule alone would be to trust

to a belief in human gratitude that would show ourselves deluded by the mere foolishness of doctrinaires run mad.

It was the military policy which inevitably came first, with the victories of Clive. But he, the first of our generals in India, was forced also to undertake civil administration. As we have seen, his system failed; and the reforms of Warren Hastings and British statesmen at home succeeded to his efforts. But the attention of Hastings was distracted by external politics and the finances of the East India Company. The critical situation in Europe and the Imperial Civil War in America prevented the British Parliament from giving much time to oriental affairs. To Hastings, however, succeeded Cornwallis, the first English nobleman who was appointed Governor of India; and under the seven years of his rule the civil policy of reform was carried far. If commercial profit was still the basis of British rule in India, it was no longer the sole object. If an active Governor-General, or in later times an enterprising Viceroy, could vary the administration to suit his own views, he was no longer an autocrat in the sense that the two great men to whom we owe the solid foundation of our oriental empire had been.

British India had grown beyond the strength of one ruler. The machine of the Indian imperial system had begun; and that system, as nearly impersonal as any human institution can be, although it had not reached the automatic accuracy of the years after the Mutiny, was already rendering India independent of changes in the governing staff, from highest to lowest official.[1]

[1] Compare the important speech in which Lord Morley, then Mr. John Morley, introduced the Indian Budget in the House of Commons on 6th June 1907. 'For the last few years,' he said, 'the doctrine of administrative efficiency has been pressed too hard. The wheels of the huge machine have been driven too fast. Our administration would be a great deal more popular if it was a trifle less efficient, a trifle more elastic. . . . There are highly experienced gentlemen who say that a little of the looseness of earlier days is better fitted, than the regular system of latter days, to keep and win personal influence, and that we are in danger of creating a pure bureaucracy. Honourable, faithful, and industrious, the servants

But Cornwallis had been forced to leave the reform of the Indian land and judicial system by the irruption of Tipú in the south; and the last period of his governorship was dedicated to arms. The five years of Sir John Shore's administration were uneventful; but at their close the necessity for action was imperative. The situation was again somewhat similar to what it had been in Clive's day. To have risked a few years of uncertain peace for a possible increase of trade would have meant that the British would, sooner or later, have been driven from India.

The Danger in India, 1798.

For the power of France had again grown in Asia. Expelled a second time from the petty remains of their possessions in India during the Imperial Civil War, the French had still not given up the hope of ultimate victory. The vast schemes of Dupleix were again being considered by Buonaparte; and Buonaparte was about to entrench himself in Egypt, the while he fixed his eyes longingly on India. One campaign by that mighty genius of war would perhaps have brought both the British and the natives of India to his feet.

Nor was the way unprepared. The French still possessed Mauritius and Bourbon, both convenient supply stations on the maritime road to Asia. French regiments formed the bodyguard of the Nizam of Haidarábád; and they were in reality his masters. The soldiers of Sindhia, the military head of the Maratha confederacy, were led by French adventurers. The Sultan of Mysore was still coquetting with France; he carried on a correspondence with the Directorate at Paris, and imitated in passable fashion the jargon of liberty that was talked under the First Republic. A tree of freedom

of the State in India are and will be, but if the present system is persisted in, there is a risk of its becoming rather mechanical, perhaps I might even say rather soulless. . . . All evidence tends to show that we are making administration less personal.' My own words in the text were written some two years before this speech was delivered; had the position been reversed, I should have been tempted to rob the most literary of our orators of these graceful but weighty sentences.

was planted in his dominions; he, an Asiatic despot, enrolled himself in a French club as Citizen Tipú. And British rule had not yet proved such an unmixed blessing that India would not have contemplated a change of masters without excessive regret. Certainly none but ourselves would have struck a blow in our defence.

All this was known to the younger Pitt. He knew, too, that the best protection of British interests in the Orient lay in a series of brilliant conquests; and he determined to strike at once. He selected his man with the unerring sagacity which seems to have been hereditary in his family; and Richard Colley, Baron Wellesley, became Governor-General of India in 1798. The son of an Irish nobleman, he had already held various official positions at home; but he was marked out for a larger sphere than England offered. 'You are dying of the cramp,' Addington had once observed to him, when no opening appeared for his abilities in Europe: but Pitt had singled him out for promotion; and on the retirement of Sir John Shore, Wellesley sailed for Calcutta.

Wellesley, 1798-1805.

Of cold but determined temperament, neither persuasion nor abuse could change him from any course that he thought desirable. Somewhat lacking in human affection, he seems to have given all the love of which he was capable to the place where he had been educated; and as Clive's thoughts in his years of exile had turned to Manchester, as Hastings had longed for Daylesford, so did Wellesley, when Governor-General of British India, ever dream of his old school on the banks of the Thames. So strong, indeed, was the sentiment which he felt for it, that even sixty years of strenuous life in Asia and in England could not abate his affection; and at his death, in 1842, he directed that he should be buried in the same Eton College chapel in which he had worshipped as a schoolboy.

He came out to India with the settled design of pursuing the forward policy. He did not believe in the system of non-

intervention which had been followed by Cornwallis and Shore; in common with Pitt, he was convinced that it was necessary to make the native rulers throughout the whole peninsula dependent on, and subordinate to, the British. The history of the ensuing seven years shows how thoroughly that policy was carried out; and a sentence in one of his later despatches proves with what contempt he looked upon the remonstrances of the directors of the East India Company, when they complained, as they continually did, that commerce was no longer the paramount interest of the English in the East. 'No additional outrage,' he wrote, 'which can issue from the most loathsome den of the India House will accelerate my departure when the public safety shall appear to require my aid.'

He inaugurates the Forward Policy.

His first proposals for expansion were opposed at Calcutta, Madras, and London. Although the directors of the Company had received the news of the French invasion of Egypt, they still clung to the hope of peace. They wrote urging 'the utmost discretion, that we may not be involved in war in India without the most inevitable necessity.' It is easy to conceive that, according to them, the necessity would never have arisen until their Asiatic territories had been lost.[1]

The English colony at Madras, as usual, protested against movement of any sort; and the merchants of Calcutta declared that 'we never before were so powerful and unassailable.' Wellesley, however, was resolute. 'Not discouraged by these suggestions and representations,' he wrote, 'I insisted on the immediate execution of my orders': and those orders were for the assembly of the army. His first step was to induce the Nizam of Haidarábád to disband his French regiments; and when British troops were substituted for them as the bodyguard of the ruler of the Deccan, there was

[1] A parallel case may be found in the reluctance of the Dutch West India Company to recognise that its American colonies were threatened by the English. See vol. i. bk. iii. chap. iii.

no difficulty in concluding a treaty of alliance with him. The potential enmity of the most powerful Mohammedan State of Southern India being thus averted, Wellesley turned his attention to Mysore.

The campaign of Cornwallis had seriously diminished the power of Tipú. But the same cause had increased his enmity ; and there is something pathetic in his belief that the aid of God and the assistance of the French would in the end deliver him from the English conquerors. His reliance on the former stood him in ill stead, for it led him again to trust in the strength of the fortress of Seringapatam ; his appeals to the latter for troops and money were the direct cause of Wellesley's immediate intervention. The Governor-General would have been satisfied had Tipú promised to permit a permanent British resident at his capital, and to dismiss every Frenchman from his service and dominions ; but when a demand to that effect was made, the Sultan of Mysore returned no answer. And therefore, ' under all the circumstances,' said Wellesley, ' an immediate attack upon Tipú, for the purpose of frustrating the execution of his unprovoked and unwarrantable projects of ambition and revenge, appeared to me to be demanded by the soundest maxims both of justice and policy.'

The Third Mysore War, 1799.

The British army marched from Madras ; Tipú became alarmed, and he complained, apparently not unreasonably, that since he had broken no treaty, there was no justice in the invasion.

Such arguments had no weight with Wellesley. It was enough for him that the French were in Egypt, and that Tipú would have welcomed them in India. The British army pressed forward ; and, aided by the troops from Haidarábád, it was more than thirty thousand strong. On the other side, Mysore was threatened by the regiments of the Bombay presidency.

Tipú attacked both in turn, but ineffectively ; and, having

failed, he shut himself up in Seringapatam. Again his capital was surrounded by the British; again it was stormed; again it was taken.

But Tipú had fallen in the defence, and when search was made for him, only his body was found, still warm, hidden among a pile of dead. The princes of the Sultan's family were generously treated by the victors, but they were not restored to the throne. The danger from the dynasty of Haidar Ali had been too great to risk the chance of another conflict: and the close of the third Mysore War ended for ever the political importance of that State.

The fall of Seringapatam brought with it the utter collapse of the government of Mysore; the whole country passed into British hands, and the younger brother of Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington, was left there to restore order. At first, indeed, everything was in confusion. We had found to our cost that the people were generally loyal to Tipú in the provinces that had been ceded to England after the war of 1792; in the interior of Mysore they were still more devoted to their late master. And in the out-lying districts there were small chiefs who had held semi-independent sway, even in the days of Haidar's greatness; these, too, were not disposed to welcome the iron hand of European dominion. Each was ready to conspire with his neighbours or with the people; each had to be separately subdued.

Wellington in Mysore, 1799-1801.

It is indeed in a strange character that we see Wellington during his two years as administrator of Mysore. The reorganisation of the government was in itself a difficult process. He was perplexed by the rumours of plots, the gossip of the bazaars, and the utterly untrustworthy character of the information volunteered by the natives; he was harassed by the disputes in his own army, and the continual problem of provisioning so large a force; and it was no easy matter to restore confidence among the people. For some time they disliked selling their

produce; only when they found they were paid punctually and honestly did disaffection diminish. Other dangers were the tigers which roamed through the land, hardly checked in the anarchy that prevailed after the fall of Seringapatam, and the bands of plunderers who ravaged the countryside and, at times, the city itself. For such pests, Wellington's plan was simple: the former were shot, the latter hanged; and after a few months there was comparative security.

He now turned his attention to the improvement of the lines of communication within the state: roads were constructed through the jungle, and the possibility of a surprise attack was thus lessened. Each province was visited in turn, and its administration reorganised; questions of revenue had to be inquired into, and the policy of imposing taxation on such articles as tobacco and the betel-nut considered. Finally, the future defence of Mysore had to be decided; and Wellington arranged that the State should be patrolled regularly by squadrons of soldiers, preferring this system to keeping garrisons in fortresses in various places, where, as he observed, they would have never been able to put down a rebellion, for they could not venture to leave their own base.

Mysore was thus finally subjugated by the British: but its ultimate destiny was a matter for serious debate. To have annexed it openly would have excited the jealousy of both the Marathas and the Nizam of the Deccan; and though the latter was hardly in a position to become a dangerous foe, the shadows of approaching war with the former were already looming over British India.

On the other hand, to have given the Marathas, as our allies for the moment, too extensive a territory, would have enlarged their power, and made them a still more formidable foe in the future; this question, however, was settled by their rejection of the share that was offered them. Wellesley accordingly resolved to set up on the throne a Rájá of the older

family whom Haidar Ali had deposed: but, 'recollecting the inconveniences and embarrassments under the double government, in Oudh, the Karnatic, and Tanjore, I resolved,' he said, 'to reserve to the Company the most extensive and indisputable powers.' Even then the advisers of the Governor-General made immediate protests at his action; it was objected, and with reason, that 'a child dragged forth from oblivion, to be placed on a throne on which his ancestors for three generations had not sat for more than half a century,' would be laughed at by the Mysoreans, and of little use to the British. The Governor-General, however, adhered to his resolution, and the historic rulers of Mysore were restored.

But Mysore still acknowledged the absolute suzerainty of the East India Company: and the whole of India south of Haidarábád and the Maratha dominions was now under British control. The first step in consolidating our oriental possessions was thus complete; the question of reforming the administration and bettering the condition of the people was left to other hands.

Wellington, indeed, was able to say of Mysore before he left it in 1801 that 'the country was becoming a garden'; but the older territories of the East India Company in the south remained in a deplorable state. The Karnatic had been poverty-stricken for years. In 1790 the Nawab of Arcot had complained that he was 'compelled to draw the very blood of his ryots to pay his present heavy instalment to the Company'; and although Cornwallis had shortly afterwards annexed his dominions, assuring Parliament and the Company's directors that 'the strongest considerations of humanity, justice, and public necessity' had impelled him to this step, there had been no apparent improvement.[1]

Misery in Southern India.

[1] When Lord Minto arrived in the south of India a few years later, the poverty of the place at once moved his pity. 'Thousands of country people,' he wrote, 'have swarmed into Madras in quest of bread, thousands are employed on public works, to thousands who can't work rice is

And the forward policy which Wellesley had initiated of set purpose did not allow him to pause in the work of conquest. Even before Mysore was thoroughly subdued, he was preparing to reduce the Marathas; and Wellington left Seringapatam only to march against Poona.

The Maratha confederation had not altered its character in the twenty years which had elapsed since the treaty between them and the British in 1782, but the power of the Peshwá had declined until he was absolutely under the control of the turbulent chiefs who owed him nominal allegiance. Those chiefs had continued to be a disturbing element in India. They had made predatory raids on their neighbours. The Mughal, the titular Emperor who still reigned at Delhi, was in the power of one. Another had encouraged Tipú in his anti-British sentiments. A third had endeavoured to induce the Nizam of Haidarábád to repudiate the treaty he had concluded with Wellesley. All, it is true, professed themselves willing and anxious to maintain good relations with the East India Company. But this was not enough for the Governor-General, for he saw that their acts belied their words.

A great part of the south of India was now British. Haidarábád was under British protection; for by the treaty of 1800 the Nizam had agreed to admit no other Europeans save the British in his dominions, to have a certain number of British troops permanently stationed in Haidarábád for the protection of that country, to set aside the revenue of certain districts to pay for their upkeep, and to submit all disputes that might arise with neighbouring states to British arbitration. It is obvious that this reduced the Nizam from the rank of a sovereign power practically to a vassal; and it was this system which Wellesley endeavoured to introduce with the Marathas. Were

The Treaty with Haidarábád, 1800.

distributed gratis daily. It is common to see famished wretches expire after the first mouthful of food, which their stomachs could no longer receive in safety.'

he to succeed in his design, and to bring to a successful conclusion the far less difficult negotiations of the same character that were going on with the ruler of Oudh, it would mean that almost the whole of India, with the exception of parts of Rajputana, the Punjab, and Kashmir, would be consolidated under British authority.

The grand ideal of Pitt would then be accomplished. Every native state in the peninsula would be subordinate to the British; no other European nation could attempt to obtain a footing there; no native ruler would be able to indulge in war with his rivals; and the Governor-General, appointed in London by Parliament and the East India Company, would be supreme from the Ganges to Cape Comorin. In the words of one of Wellesley's despatches, 'Every principle of true policy demands that no effort should be omitted by the British Government to establish a permanent foundation of general tranquillity in India, by securing to every state the free enjoyment of its just rights and independence, and by frustrating every project calculated to disturb the possessions, or to violate the rights, of the established powers of Hindustan and the Deccan.'

The Principle of British Paramountcy in India.

It is easy to stigmatise the forward policy of Wellesley as animated by the mere lust of power and conquest, as springing solely from fear of the French, as aiming simply at the conversion of India into a huge monopoly for Britain.[1] Potent as these reasons undoubtedly were, they were not all.

It is true that the commercial instinct had much to do with the forward policy; there are few things with which it has not. It is likewise true that jealousy of the intrusion of other European nations was a strong motive power: but this was not unreasonable, seeing how considerably French influence

[1] No doubt whatever exists as to the reality of Napoleon's designs on India. General Decaen was sent out from France, and he was to be 'quietly reinforced by troops in French pay sent out by every French, Spanish, or Dutch ship going to India, so as to avoid attracting notice,' until the time came for action.

had grown a second time in the East. It is equally true that Wellesley's despatches to England always emphasised the civilising effect of British interference, and showed things rather in the light in which the English people wished to see them than as they actually were. But it must be remembered that the same applied, in slightly different fashion, to Cornwallis; and as those despatches had to be presented to Parliament, the apparently incurable hypocrisy and the unlimited faculty for complacent self-deception, which seems to have become engrained in the British character since the puritan era, forced the Governors-General, if not to disavow their purpose of expanding the empire, at least to cloak it under the decent obscurity of disinterested humanitarianism.

But although Wellesley did not yet grasp, as in fact, nobody could yet grasp, the complete ideal of the British Empire in India, at any rate he saw further than his predecessors: the doctrine of the *Pax Britannica* was already an accepted political fact when it was laid down that the veto of the Governor-General must stop native wars.

Negotiations with the Marathas, 1801-3.

'An intimate alliance, founded upon principles which should render the British influence and military force the main support' of the Marathas was what Wellesley desired; and he did not cease to press it earnestly on the Peshwá. But that dignitary, although he continued to reside at Poona, no longer possessed any authority; he was threatened by Sindhia, the most powerful of the Maratha chiefs, and his adhesion to Wellesley's proposals would have been of little advantage to him. He would merely have exchanged one master for another, and the authority of the foreigner would have been more galling and less easy to throw off than that of Sindhia. He refused the proffered treaty; and Wellesley, in tones of angry disappointment, complained that 'he deliberately preferred a situation of degradation and danger, with nominal independence, to a more intimate connection.'

Thenceforward the Peshwá temporised, while still endeavouring to draw his neighbour at Haidarábád from his dependence. Wellesley grew suspicious, and the British agent at the court of Sindhia was now instructed to press the advantages of alliance in that quarter. Again there was failure: Sindhia was willing enough to preserve friendship, but he wished for no closer relationship.

But a new chief had now appeared among the Marathas, one Holkar; and when he defeated Sindhia in a great battle on 25th October 1802, the Peshwá fled from Poona, and took refuge among the British. In this crisis, he demanded to be placed in safety at Bombay: and shortly after his arrival there, the now helpless Peshwá agreed to Wellesley's original proposals, and the Treaty of Bassein was concluded on 31st December. That treaty was the foundation of all our subsequent dealings with the Marathas; but in itself it was of little effect. Sindhia would have nothing to do with it; Holkar laughed it to scorn; the smaller chiefs of the confederation became restless.

The Treaty of Bassein, 1802.

In face of their hostility, the treaty must either have remained a dead letter or be enforced by arms; and if the former were permitted, the Marathas would still have been a danger to the East India Company, and all thought of the 'complete consolidation of British India,' for which Wellesley was avowedly working, must have been given up.

In the reports which he sent home, the Governor-General invariably spoke of war as improbable; he protested that if the Peshwá, and consequently the Treaty of Bassein, were not desired by the Marathas, he would instantly relinquish every attempt upon them; even as late as June 1803 he still held out hopes of a peaceful outcome when writing to London.

Seven months before that date the armies had been ready; three months before that date they had started. Fearing that Poona might be burnt down in the absence of the Peshwá,

Wellington hurried by forced marches through a wild and difficult mountainous country, at the last, indeed, accomplishing sixty miles in thirty-two hours; and he occupied the Maratha capital without opposition. An ultimatum was sent to Sindhia, but he still temporised: 'After my interview with the Rájá (of Berar) you shall be informed,' he sent word, 'whether it will be peace or war.' The message was taken as an insult; and although negotiations still continued, war was thenceforward inevitable.

The Second Maratha War, 1803.

The main plan of operations was clearly sketched out by Wellesley. Politically, he hoped to destroy the power of the Marathas over the Mughal at Delhi, and to bring him under British protection; and, in addition, he expected to expand his general scheme of tributary alliances. In order to accomplish this, it was necessary, from a military point of view, to conquer all those dominions between the Jumna and the Ganges which acknowledged Sindhia; to root out the French force by which that district was protected; and to extend the East India Company's jurisdiction to the Jumna, including Delhi and Agra and a chain of forts in that region. Further, the conquest of Bundelkhand was contemplated.

The first campaign began when General Lake,[1] in command of an army, left Cawnpur on 7th August. After storming the Maratha fortress of Aligur, the French troops were defeated and forced to retire from the service of Sindhia. Delhi was reached, and entered in triumph on 16th September.

In a vivid despatch, Wellesley described the meeting of the British general and the Mughal. 'The crowd in the city was extraordinary; and it was with some difficulty that the cavalcade could make its way to the palace. The courts of

[1] A valuable biography of this brave General, of whom it was once said that 'he could think more clearly under the roar of battle than in the calmness and quiet of his tent,' has been published by Colonel Hugh Pearse. Lake had gained his experience in the Seven Years' Wars and the Imperial Civil War before he went to India in 1800. He died in London in 1808, at the age of sixty-four.

the palace were full of people, anxious to witness the deliverance of their sovereign from a state of degradation and bondage. At length the Commander-in-Chief was ushered into the royal presence, and found the unfortunate and venerable Emperor, oppressed by the accumulated calamities of old age, degraded authority, extreme poverty, and loss of sight; seated under a small tattered canopy, the remnant of his royal state, with every external appearance of the misery of his condition.' The hyperbolical language of the native writers assures us that the Mughal at once recovered his sight from excess of joy at his deliverance; and certainly his position as the nominal chief in a confederation of native princes, all of whom were under British authority, would be better than as a fallen monarch under the absolute control of Sindhia. In neither case would he be possessed of any real power; but at least the British would not continually outrage his dignity.

Two centuries had passed since the first English ambassador had attended at the Court of the Mughal, and had been astounded at its magnificence and wealth; and that same ambassador had exhorted his countrymen to have nothing to do with thoughts of Asiatic conquest, but to confine themselves to trade. What would have been his incredulity had it been predicted that within a few generations the British would have spread themselves through all India, and would one day rescue the Emperor of the whole peninsula from the degrading bondage to which he had sunk in the hands of a half-savage usurper.

Lake, however, had little time for ceremony, and still less for melancholy reflections on the decay of human greatness; within a few days he pressed on to Agra. That important city taken, he went in pursuit of the remains of Sindhia's northern army. At the severe battle of Laswari, the enemy were destroyed or dispersed; and a brilliant campaign thus came to an end after three months of unvarying success.

Meanwhile Wellington had been as active in the south of

the Maratha dominions as Lake in the north. Leaving his camp on 8th August 1803, he had marched against the allied forces of Sindhia and the Rájá of Berar. The important fortress of Ahmednagar captured, he followed the two princes into the territories of Haidarábád, whither they had gone to attack the Nizam.

Coming up with them at the village of Assaye, Wellington decided on battle, though his army was many times out-numbered by theirs. The fight was long, severe, and at first indecisive; but after heavy losses had been inflicted on the British, the natives fled, leaving behind an enormous number of dead, besides ninety-eight cannon and seven standards.

Assaye, 1803.

Sindhia now made overtures for peace, and applied for an armistice: but as nothing was heard from the Rájá of Berar, it was refused; and the decisive victory of Argaum a little later still further weakened the Maratha forces.

About the same time the Madras army overran and conquered Bundelkhand, while Guzerat fell before the troops of the Bombay presidency. Protracted resistance was now hopeless: the Marathas were on the verge of ruin; and on 30th November, the day after the battle of Argaum, a conference was requested. It was granted: but the first meetings resulted in nothing save tedious recriminations. Both Wellington and his enemies looked on the other as the aggressor, and it was some time before the representative of the Marathas admitted that, however the war might have begun, his master was anxious to end it.

At length, a treaty was concluded with the Rájá of Berar, on condition that he resigned a great part of his territory; he was unwilling to do so, but Wellington threatened to pursue him to his capital at Nagpúr if he would not agree to the terms offered.

The whole British army was now free to overwhelm Sindhia; and he, too, quickly sent an emissary to negotiate. Again began the interminable disputes as to who was the aggressor,

which were only cut short by Wellington's brutally direct remark that, whoever had started the war, Sindhia had lost it. The long conferences lasted nearly three weeks, Sindhia disputing vainly over each piece of territory that he was required to relinquish. In the end, the treaty was concluded on 29th December 1803; and Sindhia gave up all the country between the Jumna and the Ganges, as well as the districts of Jaipur, Jodipur, and Gohud, the fort and territory of Baroak, Ahmednagar, and other places; he abandoned all claims on the British Government, and agreed that all the minor princes of the Maratha states should be dependent on the East India Company. Unwillingly he was forced to enter into the general system of alliances, the English binding themselves at the same time not to interfere between him and his subjects. No French, or indeed any Europeans or even Americans were to be allowed in his dominions without the consent of the Company; and he was bound to consult with them on all his relations with his neighbours.

The second Maratha War thus ended, as it appeared, in the complete subjection of those states. The western side of India was therefore added to the enormous confederation which Wellesley was building up: the south was already British; there yet remained the north. And here too the Governor-General had accomplished much, even during the time that the Mysore and Maratha Wars were in progress. The conquest of Delhi and Agra belongs to the latter struggle; in Oudh there is a more intricate series of events to unravel. That kingdom had for many years paid tribute to the East India Company. Lying on the frontiers of Bengal, it had been more or less subject to British influence since the victories of Clive and the administration of Hastings had consolidated British power in that district.

The Annexation of Oudh, 1801.

But the rulers of Oudh had still preserved the functions of royalty at Lucknow; and when Wellesley arrived in India,

they controlled their own army and levied their own taxes. The country was large; the people were industrious; the soil was fertile.

Misgovernment and misery of Oudh.

But during the last few years a terrible change had come over the land. The new ruler was far more ostentatious than his predecessor, and his resources were squandered on external display. Oudh, from being one of the richest of the Indian provinces, became one of the poorest. When Cornwallis visited it, he was shocked by its desolate appearance; on all sides were signs of a disordered government and a poverty-stricken people. A great part of the blame, it is true, must be imputed to the East India Company: for it was from Oudh that Warren Hastings had extorted some of the heaviest subsidies. But considerable reparation was made when Cornwallis reduced the amount of the annual contributions; and still the state of the country did not improve. Rather did it continue to deteriorate: when Cornwallis left India, in 1793, he placed it on record that 'The evils which prevailed . . . had increased; the finances had fallen into a worse state by an enormous accumulated debt; the same oppressions continued to be exercised . . . towards the ryots; and not only the subjects and merchants of Oudh, but those residing under the Company's protection, suffered many exactions.' And that Governor-General attributed the whole source of the evil to 'the connivance and irregularities of the administration of Lucknow.'

Sir John Shore, the successor of Cornwallis, took the same view, and again recommended reform and economy. Were nothing done, it was evident that the kingdom and all within it must soon be ruined, and, in consequence, the contribution annually paid to the East India Company must lapse.

It seemed, indeed, that the financial system was past restoration. 'The discharge of one debt was effected, not from the revenue, but by contracting another at an increasing

interest.' In spite of Shore's policy of non-intervention, he was forced to interfere in the affairs of Oudh, to such a crisis had matters now come: and, in March 1797, he visited Lucknow with the purpose of restoring some semblance of order. The unfortunate Governor immediately found himself involved in a maze of court intrigue and scandal; the legitimacy of the reigning prince was impugned, and Shore confessed that he was utterly confused by the conflict of testimony as to the bastardy of the man with whom he had come to remonstrate. Eventually he determined on his deposition.

But matters had not improved when Wellesley arrived; and it was impossible for one who intended to consolidate India to leave this plague-spot of misgovernment on the very border of Bengal. Accordingly he pressed a treaty on the Prince of Oudh; but it was a different treaty from that which he invited the other native rulers to sign. It provided for the abdication of the prince, and it did not provide for a successor: the native troops were to be disbanded, since they were 'useless, if not dangerous'; English soldiers were to be substituted for them; and a general reform of the administration was outlined.

Objection was naturally taken, but Wellesley stood firm. He and his ancestors had held Oudh for seven hundred years, said the vizir; why then should he now be deposed? His soldiers were capable of the defence of the country; why then should they now be disbanded?

For answer Wellesley sent a British regiment. The vizir complained, equivocated, delayed, and employed the usual devices of the weak when struggling against the strong; but his troops were dismissed, and their arrears of pay settled in full by the East India Company to avoid any disorder.

Still the vizir complained, and the misery of the kingdom continued; the revenue was, as usual, collected in advance from the wretched ryots, and the insecurity of their tenure

was as fatal to the welfare of the country as ever. At length it became impossible to haggle over terms any longer; and on 10th November 1801 the treaty was signed.

The abdication of the prince was not insisted on, and he became a puppet in the hands of the English. But the whole administration of Oudh from that day passed to the East India Company; and Wellesley anticipated a speedy return of order, industry, and prosperity. It did not occur during his period of office: but at least one more step was taken in the consolidation of the British Indian Empire.

Wellesley had hoped that the trouble with the Marathas was finally at an end; instead, it was only beginning. In spite of the treaties which bound them, all the chiefs were restless. Sindhia was crushed, but only for a time. Bundelkhand was ripe for revolt. Bharatpur was a hotbed of intrigue. And there yet remained Holkar. The most powerful of all the Maratha chiefs since the victory which had driven the Peshwá from Poona, he had taken no part in the late war. But while he professed his friendship for the East India Company, there were few princes with whom he had not conspired secretly against the English. When peace was concluded with Sindhia, Holkar too was offered the treaty which Wellesley wished to make with every native ruler.

British Misfortunes, 1803-5.

He replied amicably, but deceit was in his heart. Intercepted letters proved his intrigues; and he was warned. His army menaced the British provinces; and he was asked to withdraw it. In reply, he made impossible demands on Wellesley, and threatened Wellington that our 'countries should be overrun, plundered, and burnt; we should not have leisure to breathe for a moment, and calamities would fall on thousands of human beings in continued war by the attacks of his army, which overwhelmed like the waves of the sea.'

Such preposterous language could not be allowed for a

moment, and Wellington prepared for war. But fortune seemed now to have deserted the British arms. Holkar, indeed, was forced to retreat, but he was not defeated. It was almost impossible for Wellington to advance through the Deccan, for that district was suffering from a scarcity that might have been called a famine.

Elsewhere, it is true, one or two successes stood out isolated in the general failure of the British arms. Indore was captured; and when Holkar surprised Delhi, that city, which had hitherto always capitulated at the first approach of an enemy, was gallantly defended. The garrison was so small that nobody dared undress, or go off duty. For nine days the troops had no rest, and the men were kept awake and in good humour by gifts of sweetmeats. At length, after a successful sortie by the British, Holkar retired baffled; and soon afterwards, his southern possessions were conquered, and he himself was defeated under the walls of Dig.

But these small victories could not be set off against our misfortunes in Bundelkhand and elsewhere. The British army was almost overwhelmed by the rains; General Monson, who was in command, was obliged to spike his guns and leave the country as best he could; and this was but the prelude to a long and disastrous retreat through Central India.

In Bharatpur it was the same. The Rájá of that country was allied with the British by treaty; but he was more than disposed to join with Holkar. Wellesley remonstrated in lofty tones: 'The just principles of policy, as well as the characteristic lenity and mercy of the British Government, required that a due indulgence should be manifested towards the imbecility, ignorance, and indolence of the native chiefs, who had been drawn into these acts by the depravity and artifices of their servants and adherents.' But his words were of no effect: the Rájá disregarded the treaty; and an army was sent against him. The strength of the fortress of Bharatpur defied all our efforts; after repeated assaults, and

heavy loss, it was found impossible to capture it. Meanwhile there were continual disputes with Sindhia, and no advantage was gained against Holkar: eventually the two chiefs joined forces. The whole Maratha trouble seemed about to begin again.

But the expenses of the war were enormous. The directors of the East India Company had long chafed under the forward policy. They were now able to urge that it was not merely costly, but that it also led to nothing; that our conquests were not permanent, and that they were unprofitable even if they were permanent. They could point to the miserable poverty of the Madras presidency; to the wretched state of Oudh; to the anarchy of the Maratha territories. All these troubles could, with some plausibility, be ascribed to Wellesley; and the expenditure they involved was undeniable. The directors of the Company omitted to remark that under his rule the menace of a French conquest of India had been dissipated.

Recall of Wellesley, 1805.

The British Government became alarmed. It was the darkest hour of the struggle with Napoleon. The French armies were at Boulogne, menacing England every day; Europe lay at the feet of the triumphant dictator; and Trafalgar was not yet won. It was no time to conquer India when England herself might fall. Accordingly the Ministry yielded to the representations of the East India Company. Wellesley was recalled; and in his place Cornwallis was sent out for a second term of office, now in extreme old age, feeble, and lying almost at death's door. There was a sudden and complete reversal of policy: the new Governor-General was charged to make peace with the Marathas on almost any terms; and an era of severe economy set in.

His Policy Abandoned.

So ended Wellesley's Governor-Generalship in defeat and apparent failure. The expansion he had planned was disapproved. The system of alliances with the natives, so

elaborately constructed, collapsed like a house of cards. The British put aside their dream of empire in India, and once more became commercial.

But the reaction lasted for a few years only. The main features of Wellesley's policy were amply justified long before his death. He had seen that there would be no peace for India until the Marathas were crushed; and crushed they were, after a long and severe struggle fifteen years later. He had declared that every native ruler must be brought to depend on the sovereign British power; and the next fifty years saw the gradual accomplishment of his idea. He perceived that the whole of India must be protected against the savage tribes of the north by a large army, and a consolidated system of defence: the general experience of the nineteenth century proved the truth of his words, and it is still the standard doctrine of the present day.

But eventually vindicated.

CHAPTER V

THE LAST MARATHA WAR: 1805-28[1]

When Lord Wellesley, the fourth Governor-General of British India, arrived at Calcutta in the year 1798, the fate of the great oriental peninsula was still undecided. India as a whole might have fallen either to the English, the French, or the Marathas; or it might have been split up once more into small provinces under separate Hindu and Musalmán rulers, after a more or less prolonged period of anarchy and civil war. But when Wellesley left the East seven years later,

[1] Authorities.—Mill's *History of India*, which stops at 1805, is continued by H. H. Wilson as far as 1835. Wilson is more impartial and interesting than Mill; but then he had been in India, and Mill had not. In addition, Minto's *Life and Letters* should be consulted for the term of his Governor-Generalship. For the whole period, Hunter is an indispensable guide; Malleson's *Native States of India* is also useful.

only the English and the Marathas counted as factors in the struggle for the empire of India; and between these two the English held an enormous permanent advantage, although at the time the Marathas were apparently victorious. Wellesley could therefore justly claim that he had 'finally placed the British power in India in a commanding position.'

Abandonment of the Forward Policy.

But with that curious alternation of advance and retreat which appears in every phase of our politics, the time had come when the forward military policy of Britain in Asia was to be abandoned. Its expense had frightened the directors of the East India Company, and had made even the imperial authorities uneasy. Cornwallis was hurriedly sent out to patch up a general peace, and to economise in every department of the State; while Wellesley on his return to England had to run the gauntlet of abuse, and to be the butt of that uninformed and prejudiced criticism which it is the eternal privilege of the stay-at-home to direct at those who have acted instead of merely talking. A vain attempt was made to impeach him in the House of Commons. One Member of Parliament arraigned his conduct in Oudh, 'by which the Nawab in defiance of justice had been degraded and disgraced in the eyes of the world.' Other charges were added, consonant with a recent motion by Sir Philip Francis, whose inexhaustible venom was directed at one Governor-General after another, that 'to pursue schemes of conquest and aggrandisement in India is repugnant to the wish, the honour, and the policy of this country.'

But the agitation against Wellesley fell flat. Fox frankly avowed that since the trial of Warren Hastings he would have no more to do with Indian impeachments; even the seconder of the motion declared that he was ashamed of it; and the member who had originally brought it forward was rejected by his constituents at the next election. An intermittent controversy on the subject was, it is true, maintained

for some years, but the feeble attempts to disgrace Wellesley all failed; and the East India Company, which had been hostile to him on his return as one who had wasted its substance, came in time to recognise his great services before his death.

Wellington's recent conquests in India, indeed, had aroused comparatively little attention at home, for the terrific struggle with Napoleon in Europe overshadowed the remoter politics of Asia; and British Indian problems were already far too intricate to be anything but the occupation of specialists. Wisely recognising the necessary limitations of their knowledge, English politicians from this time generally left Indian affairs alone. There was some temporary excitement when the renewal of the East India Company's charter was debated in the first Reformed Parliament of 1833, and a fundamental change was made in the character of that powerful corporation;[1] the terrible disaster of 1841 in Afghánistán, and the Mutiny of 1857, made not England alone, but all Europe, shudder; but apart from these events, which in the popular estimation stood out incorrectly as almost the sole features worthy of remembrance in a crowded century, the British people as a whole were content to remain in ignorance of their Indian possessions.

When Cornwallis arrived a second time in the East, a dying man, to change the whole forward policy of Wellesley for one of retrenchment and peace, his report on the condition of India was extremely pessimistic. According to

[1] I append the names and dates of some of the ephemeral tracts and pamphlets published regarding India at this time—*The Present State and Future Prospects of the Free Trade and Colonisation of India*, 1829; *Aye or No on the India Question: A Few Words to the Reformed Parliament*, 1833—both treating of the renewal of the Company's charter; *Reasons for the Establishment of a New Bank in India*, 1836; *The Export of Coolies and other Labourers to Mauritius*, 1842; *Reasons for Railways in Madras and Bombay*, 1847; *Is India to have Railways?* 1853. To these may be added the general series known as India Reform Tracts, representing the advanced radical opinion of mid-Victorian times. The numerous works of the Evangelical school must be studied for the project of introducing Christianity in India, which engaged much attention at this time.

the new Governor-General, 'the most brilliant success could afford no solid benefit'; the state of the finances was 'most discouraging'; the alliance with the Peshwá was 'an intolerable burden'; it was 'with great regret' that he saw the treaty with Haidarábád; and he finally declared, in a phrase that can only be read with amazement, that 'not the least unfortunate consequences of . . . our alliances has been the gradually increasing ascendency of the British influence and authority.'

But Cornwallis belonged to a school of Anglo-Indian statesmen whose day was over; and although he and his successor wished to stop the expansion of the empire, they were only able to delay it for a few years. An ignominious agreement was at once arranged with the Marathas, to the utter disgust of many of the officers and civilians who had served under Wellesley, and who foresaw that a final struggle with that confederation was inevitable; and Sir George Barlow, who succeeded automatically to the Governor-Generalship on the death of Cornwallis, was prepared to go even further in his desire for economy.

Much of the land in dispute with Sindhia was now restored; all of Holkar's territories were given back. Bundelkhand alone was retained, but it was not thoroughly subdued; and the Rájás of Rajputana, whom Britain had sworn to protect from the Marathas, were abandoned. In these measures Barlow was supported by the directors of the East India Company, and by the Council at Calcutta, which declared that 'a certain extent of dominion, local power, and revenue would be cheaply sacrificed for tranquillity and security within a more contracted circle'; they believed, too, that nothing could now be 'apprehended from the further depredations of banditti,' and they vainly hoped that these concessions would be accepted as a sign of magnanimity.

Barlow was one of those men of hard, cold character who can only see a short way ahead, but who follow that way with

undeviating purpose. His inflexible and unsympathetic manner soon became unpopular in the East, and his policy was disliked by the Cabinet at home; but for some time the members of the British Government could not agree as to the appointment of a successor. At length the choice fell on Lord Minto, who served, as he himself said, as a sort of peace-offering between the opponents. His reputation in England was that of an able man of moderate opinions; to Anglo-Indians, however, he was something of an unknown quantity. Proud of being numbered 'among those whom Burke loved best and most trusted,' he had been one of the managers at the trial of Warren Hastings, and might therefore have been expected to favour the extreme exponents of the doctrine of British non-intervention in the affairs of the independent native Indian states; but, on the other hand, he had come much under the influence of the younger Pitt, who had been directly responsible for the appointment of Wellesley.

His actions showed Minto to be a firm yet cautious ruler. Of strong common sense, and gifted with a playful, sunny disposition—even his official correspondence is occasionally relieved by a witty remark [1]—the six years of his governorship mark an intermediate period between the conquests of Wellesley and the long series of wars under his successors, Hastings and Amherst.

Among the instructions which Minto had received from the East India Company, particular stress had been laid upon the policy of non-intervention, which the directors consistently favoured; and the Governor-General honourably endeavoured to obey orders without weakening the prestige of the British in Asia. But those who have entered on the path of empire cannot draw back unless they resign their calling

[1] The mass of routine work was already so great as to occupy practically the whole time of the Governor-General. Minto laughingly alludes in his correspondence to his strong tendency to go to sleep when the monotony was more than usually tiresome; but 'if the sovereign nods,' he added, 'the empire must fall to pieces.'

altogether; and it is significant of the onward march of those forces which no ruler and no policy can neglect or oppose with impunity, that under the pacific rule of Minto the influence of Britain began to penetrate among states that lay far beyond the frontier fixed by Wellesley, while the first signs of our expansion appeared in lands which even Wellington would have regarded it as madness to invade.

Diplomatic Missions under Minto.

Once more it was the fear of French rivalry that urged the British forward. The French had indeed lost everything in India. But Napoleon, who was then at the zenith of his fame, still possessed dreams of Asiatic conquest; and France yet possessed important island stations on the high seas that might have been used as dangerous bases for an attack on the eastern continent. Under Minto, therefore, the Moluccas, Bourbon, Mauritius, and Java were all seized by Britain;[1] and French power in the Indian Ocean existed no more until the conquest of Madagascar was accomplished nearly a century later.

But it was hardly by sea that a descent on India was now feared. France had recently concluded an alliance with Russia; both were endeavouring to extend their influence in Persia and Afghánistán in order, as was supposed, that their combined forces might make an attack on India overland. The two powers had as yet made no progress towards an amicable understanding with the wild Afghán tribes; but in the enfeebled and corrupt Court of Persia their influence was soon supreme. Magnificent embassies and numerous military retinues were sent thither; French political agents seemed suddenly to swarm all over Asia, and some even appeared to tempt the Indian princes from their alliance with England. It was rumoured that Napoleon had planned a descent on Persia through Turkey and Asia Minor; and, though the plan of campaign which was attributed to him

[1] For the history of these islands under British rule, see book viii. chap. iv. and vol. iv.

now appears fantastically impossible, the man at whose feet the whole of Europe then lay seemed able at that time to accomplish anything to which he set his hand.

At any rate, Minto wisely determined to leave nothing to chance, and he prepared to improve the defences of India; at the same time remarking that, in the event of actual invasion, it was better to meet the enemy in Persia than in British territory. In addition, he decided to send embassies to Persia and Afghánistán, in order to counteract the designs of the French in those countries. These measures, it is true, involved heavy expenditure, and some departure from the policy of non-intervention; but the East India Company perceptibly relaxed its attitude of strict economy when the justice of Minto's representations was realised.

There was nothing novel in the appearance of a British embassy at an Asiatic court. For many years every visit by an agent of the Company to the courts of India had been regarded as an opening up of fresh relations with foreign powers. An official ambassador from England had already appeared in China. And commercial relations with Persia were not new, while Wellesley had sent an ambassador to that country in 1800.

But the two British agents who visited Persia while Minto was Governor-General of India were both unsuccessful in their missions. The first failed because of the overbearing tone in which he insisted on the instant dismissal of the French members of the royal circle. The second certainly concluded a treaty with the Shah, but this proved merely a negative advantage; for the only important clause of that treaty compelled Britain to furnish military aid in the event of Persia being at war with a foreign power; and when Persia became involved in a ruinous struggle with Russia in 1826, we refused to fulfil our promise.

But by the time the two ambassadors had returned from Persia, the menace from Napoleon was less urgent. Spain

was now opposing a brave resistance to his invasion of the south of Europe, and before Minto left India the great army of the French Emperor had fallen a victim to the snows of Russia.

More important in their ultimate results were the other diplomatic missions organised by Minto. For the first time in the history of India a British embassy crossed the Indus, and pressed on to Peshwar, where the chief of the Afgháns was interviewed; while a second embassy visited the head of the Sikhs at Lahore. Thus was the scope of Indian policy widened, and the circle of British diplomatic influence enlarged; and although no immediate territorial aggrandisement was obtained, the temptation already existed when the magnificence of the Punjab became known. And there were also solid reasons to be urged for obtaining a securer frontier against the Afgháns, while military ambition could dwell on the chances of glory and promotion in a campaign beyond the Indus. Another thirty years, and British armies had been seen both in Kabul and the Punjab.

But Minto was far from such thoughts of expansion. With the limitations that had been imposed upon him, it was enough if he could keep the British possessions intact, and preserve order therein. Bundelkhand had not been thoroughly reduced during Wellesley's term of office, and Minto was forced to undertake a number of punitive military operations before peace could be restored in that country. The affairs of the Madras presidency likewise required attention; there was continued disaffection in the local army; and Barlow, who was now Governor of the South, had made himself generally unpopular there, as he had in Bengal, by his passion for economy, that least appreciated of all the unattractive virtues, both in public and domestic life.

Another matter that called for stern measures was the increasing depredations of the dacoits. Those robber gangs had of late imposed a terrorist system on many parts of India.

'If a family was half murdered, and half tortured, the tortured survivors could not be prevailed upon to appear against the criminals. Men have been found with the limbs and half the flesh of their bodies consumed by slow fire, who persisted in saying that they had fallen into their own fire. . . . They knew, if they spoke, they would either themselves or the remaining members of their families, be despatched the same evening.' Such are Minto's own words; and although he was unable to suppress the dacoits altogether, much was done to reduce their evil power.

Thus in keeping order on the frontiers and inland, in rebuking the pretensions of foreign potentates, native rájás, or predatory chiefs, the busy seven years of Minto's rule in India drew to a close; and the directors of the East India Company received the news of his intention to retire almost at the same time that they demanded his resignation. A home-loving man, the Governor-General had for months counted the very days till he should return to Scotland and his family; but, hurrying northwards immediately on his arrival in England, he was taken suddenly ill and died on the road. Long afterwards, the letters he had written from Calcutta to his wife at Minto, fondly anticipating many years of quiet happiness together in the decline of their lives, were found tied up in black string, and endorsed in her handwriting, 'Poor Fools.' The earthly hope was turned to dust in the very moment of its fulfilment.

Marquis of Hastings, 1813.

The Marquis of Hastings, who followed Minto as Governor-General in 1813, had been a man of no great distinction in England;[1] the gossips said, indeed, that he owed his appointment mainly to his friendship with the Prince Regent. But, as often happens among men of aristocratic family in whom the tradition of government is hereditary, he rose to the occasion; and the long

[1] He had, however, taken part in the Imperial Civil War as a young man, and General Burgoyne declared that he 'behaved to a charm.'

period of ten years during which he was the supreme governor of British India marked a still further advance of the British power in Asia. If the forward policy was not again initiated of set purpose, it was at any rate followed in fact. The British had conquered half India, and the directors of the East India Company would have been well satisfied to have kept their dominions, without either expansion or contraction. But the last eight years had clearly proved that it was impossible to stand still. Cornwallis had urgently desired peace; he had been obliged to give up territory to obtain it. Barlow had done the same; but his concessions had been derided as weakness by the natives, and every little prince and chief had assumed a tone of supercilious condescension in dealing with the exalted heads of the British Government in India. Even when the passion for economy was at its height, Barlow had been compelled to send punitive expeditions to restore order in various places. Minto likewise was no lover of war, and he had no wish to incur increased responsibilities, although he would not have shirked them had they become necessary. And they did in fact become necessary; for he was obliged to keep old foes in check, to open up relations with new states, which were also potential enemies, to conquer islands in the Indian Ocean, to extirpate pirates in the Persian Gulf, and to offer to protect China against the French.

Peace remained indeed the ideal for British India. But there could be no real peace until India was altogether British; for every hungry band of frontier robbers, every petty rájá who remained unsubdued in the interior, could descend on the fertile and industrious British provinces to plunder and ravage at will. One such raid would disturb the sense of security; a succession would destroy all feeling of imperial protection.

A typical instance of the frontier dangers to which India was exposed was provided by the Nepal War, which occupied

the first two years of Hastings' governorship.[1] The kingdom of Nepal lies on the long slope between the Himalayas and the River Ganges. Its northern boundaries are lost in the eternal snows where mountain lies heaped upon mountain in stupendous confusion; its southern limit was claimed as including part at least of the great agricultural district that leads down to the sacred river. The original population of mixed Tibetan cast had been subject for generations to the warlike tribes of Gurkhas; and that fiery race had frequently descended on Bengal to plunder the weaker Hindus. Their ravages had not ceased when Bengal passed under the rule of the East India Company; and although they were often divided by internal feuds, the Gurkhas were yet strong enough to conquer their neighbours.

The Nepal War, 1814-5.

Treaties were made with Nepal by the British in 1791 and 1801; both were broken by the warriors of the north. Wellesley would have attacked them, but was prevented by his recall. Barlow, utterly misunderstanding their predatory character, proposed mutual concessions as a basis for the delimitation of the frontier. Long negotiations were entered into, but the raids continued; for the Gurkhas treated the mild suggestions of the English Governor as a confession of impotence, and plundered while they parleyed. Minto sent a force to defend the frontier in 1809, and to expel the intruders; but he found it impossible to defend a frontier seven hundred miles long.

Hastings took a more effective course. By decisive action he gave the Nepalis the alternative of peace or war; and when they returned an evasive answer he at once proclaimed war, on 1st November 1814.

In the Nepal capital of Khatmandu, there were two opinions as to the wisdom of fighting. Those who knew the most of the previous deeds of the English in India, declared that

[1] Wright's *History of Nepal* contains a good account of this campaign.

whereas the Gurkhas had formerly only chased deer, they must now prepare to fight with tigers ; but these were opposed by the party which had heard of our failure to storm the great fortress of Bharatpur. If, it was said, the English could not overcome the puny works of man, how then should they be able to conquer the Nepalis, who dwelt in the very fastnesses of God ?

The latter view prevailed. There could hardly be a more convincing illustration of the loss of prestige which even one isolated check to European arms occasions in the mind of Asiatics.

The failure of Minto to protect the British frontier from Gurkha raids decided Hastings against a merely defensive war ; and the great army of 30,000 men which he gathered together was instructed to separate into four divisions, and to march directly against the capital of Nepal. But the country was excessively difficult. The long ascent to the mountains was impossible in the rainy season, and unhealthy during the other months of the year ; communication with the base was necessarily insecure ; it was, moreover, doubtful whether sufficient supplies for so large a force could be obtained from a generally poor soil. The whole of Nepal was rugged and mountainous ; the passes were dangerous, and dotted with forts ; blinding snowstorms at times swept over the land. And the Gurkhas were a brave, impetuous, and clever foe, who well understood how to use the advantages which nature had given them.

Small headway was made at first, for the British commanders, with the belief in sheer courage and a disregard for scientific warfare that is typically British, attacked the Gurkha forts with men and not with cannon, only to be driven back with terrible loss. ' The results of the first campaign,' says the military historian of the war, ' must have confounded the calculations of the noble Marquis and every one else. That portion of the army with which it was meant to make an

impression on the enemy in the seat of his power remained inactive, while the skirmishers on the left flank, which could have been only intended to produce a diversion, succeeded to an extent that shook the Gurkha on his throne.'

A definite treaty was drawn up on 28th November 1815: but the Rájá refused to sign it, and a further expedition was sent against him. This time he gave way, ceding the frontier provinces of Kamaon and Gerwhal, and permitting a British agent to reside in his capital.

By the previous treaty of 1801 a British Residency was also to have been established in Nepal. But the minister whom Wellesley had appointed to that post had found every obstacle placed in his way even before he reached the capital; and when he at last arrived at Khatmandu, a short stay convinced him that nothing could be done with a people 'among whom no engagements, however solemnly contracted, were considered binding when deviation from them' seemed to promise a temporary advantage. The new ambassador was less openly obstructed; but he soon discovered that the spot assigned for his residence was a barren piece of land, waterless and very unhealthy, and supposed to be the abode of demons. Science, however, circumvented the superstitious intentions of the Nepalis; and in a few years cultivation had made the grounds of the British Residency one of the best wooded and most beautiful spots in the whole valley.

Thus ended the first of the series of wars in which the defence of the enormous extent of the northern frontier of India was to engage the British. But the Nepalis, although defeated, were in no mood for tame submission. The Rájá applied to China, of which empire he was nominally a fief, for aid in revenging the invasion of his territories.[1] He received the

[1] He had already applied for Chinese aid in 1814, concluding his appeal with the words, 'Consider if you abandon your dependents that the English will soon be masters of Lhasa'—(Boulger's *History of China*). Ninety years elapsed before the British expedition to Tibet proved that there was some truth in his forecast.

cold reply that he had only himself to blame for the punishment that had been inflicted on him. Not discouraged by the rebuff, he began to intrigue with the native princes of India, attempting to detach from the British those who had signed treaties of alliance with the Governor-General, and to provoke to open war against us those who had not yet come under our influence. His plots were discovered before they could do harm, and as he was unwilling himself to venture on another war, there was no further trouble with Nepal for many years.

But the treaty with Nepal was hardly concluded before it became necessary to check an enemy in India itself. The third and last round in the struggle with the Marathas was now to be fought. Ten years had proved the uselessness of the concessions of Cornwallis and the rigid economy of Barlow; the pacification they had planned had brought only an increase of disorder in Central and Western India. The older chiefs of the Marathas had indeed been almost crushed by Wellesley, and they never thoroughly recovered from his attack. Holkar was for a time intoxicated and insane; Sindhia was reduced to beg for a pension from his late foes; the Rájá of Berar had to implore British assistance in securing his dominions; and the Gaekwar of Baroda convinced even Barlow that his country was in so desperate a condition that it would have been ruined had not the Governor-General sanctioned a departure in this case from the strict policy of non-intervention.

The Third Maratha War, 1817.

But though the Maratha princes were thus impotent, the hereditary fighting instinct of their tribes remained. The neighbouring countries were again plundered and pillaged; and while the British had sworn to protect Rajputana from the fury of the Marathas, the several states which are included under that collective name were abandoned to the tender mercies of freebooters whose fighting qualities had been im-

proved by a long war, but who still remained at bottom mere looters.

Against such men the Rajputs were powerless. The Peshwá would not interfere. And when Holkar amd Sindhia began once more to recover a little of their old authority, the profits of such marauding expeditions were far too valuable to be lightly foregone. They detested the British. They were constantly plotting against us; and by carrying fire and sword unopposed into the territories of those allies who should have been, but were not, protected by us, they considerably reduced both the prestige and the actual power of the English in India.

They were joined, too, by other independent gangs of robbers, the Pindaris: men who attacked helpless villages, but ran away at the first sight of a soldier; fighting, when fighting was absolutely necessary, on horseback and armed with rude pikes, swords, clubs and sticks, and occasionally with matchlocks. Whole communities went in constant fear of these wretches, for the tortures they inflicted were of a ghastly character. They would enclose a man's head in a bag of ashes and dust, beating his face until he was suffocated; a more refined cruelty was to use hot ashes and powdered chillies. At other times their captives were pinioned, and either boiling oil was sprinkled over them, or straw was tied round their bodies and fired; while infants were tossed on the sword, and their mothers violated even while bemoaning the fate of husband or child.

The doctrine of non-intervention might be, and was, in fact, pressed far; but no man born in a civilised country could see such deeds occur and not abandon all his theories until these savage practices had been put down with a firm hand. Minto had defended the British possessions in India as best he could, consistently with the instructions he had received from London, although he realised that his action was at the utmost only palliative; Hastings was forced to

sterner action. The ravages of the Marathas and the Pindaris both increased during the Nepal War; and, the British troops being occupied far away on a dangerous campaign, their demands became higher and more insolent in tone, it being even threatened at one time that they would wreak their wrath on Calcutta.

At the close of the year 1815 they plundered three hundred villages, and wounded, tortured, and murdered four thousand persons of both sexes, and of all ages; and as their descents were made without warning and their subsequent departure was as rapid, it was seldom that punishment could overtake them. It is true that it was difficult for Hastings to make a move. No help could be expected from our quondam allies of Rajputana, for they were in a state of absolute incapacity. The Rájá of Jodhpur pretended idiocy, and resigned his throne to a dissolute prince who was eventually assassinated. The Rájá of Udaipur was robbed of his possessions by military adventurers. The Rájá of Jaipur was a slave to a Mohammedan dancing-girl.

And while Hastings was thus driven to rely solely on the British power, his superiors in London still clung fast to the fatal idea of non-intervention. On 28th September 1815, the Secret Committee of the East India Company had sent him word that 'the system which was consolidated at the close of the last Maratha War should be maintained with as little change as could be avoided'; while Canning warned him that the British Government was 'unwilling to incur the risk of a general war for the uncertain purpose of extirpating the Pindaris,' and advocated the 'judicious management of our existing relations' for a solution of every difficulty. Once again was shown the impossibility of a Council in London appreciating accurately the situation in a country thousands of miles away with which its members were not personally acquainted: the advices sent out by the Secretary of State were a mere bundle of useless words, while Hastings was faced by

concrete facts. Had the Council been able to override the Governor-General on this matter, there is no question that the British power in India would have declined rapidly, as the knowledge of its inability to put down disorder reached every petty rájá who subsisted by preying on his richer neighbours.

But Hastings was not the man to let official instructions stand in his way when necessity dictated a different course. A large army was assembled, and in April 1817 members of the Pindaris and many other insurgents were caught and defeated. The most important of these gangs were broken up during the next few months, and the scattered remnants fled to hiding in the hills. Meanwhile the Treaty of Bassein was annulled, and the Peshwá was coerced into accepting a new treaty called of Poona, on 15th June 1817, by which, instead of himself maintaining troops to protect the Maratha countries, he was forced to pay the British for their protection by the cession of various provinces; and, in addition, he was compelled to give up various fortresses and to agree never again to interfere in the external political relations of his state. The latter provision was hardly worth the paper on which it was written: but the Peshwá assented reluctantly and with many protests.

At the same time alliances were concluded with other more friendly rulers, which were useful in that they permitted the Bengal regiments to march through their countries without hindrance; and, on 14th September 1817, Hastings assumed command of the great army of 113,000 troops and 300 cannon which was finally to subdue the Marathas. Delayed awhile by the monsoon, which rendered the rivers too swollen to cross and the roads impracticable for marching, and hindered later by an outbreak of spasmodic cholera which killed hundreds of men and laid Hastings himself low, the opportunity was used by the Peshwá to attempt to bribe our subsidiary forces into treachery; and on the departure of Mountstuart Elphin-

stone, our envoy at Poona, the British Residency was burnt down. But the duplicity of the Peshwá was discovered, as was also that of Sindhia, whose letters of intrigue to the Rájá of Nepal were intercepted; and when it was found that other Maratha chiefs, including the Rájá of Nagpúr, had thrown in their lot with their nominal ruler, it became evident that the whole Maratha confederacy would take up arms against the British.

The campaign which followed is among the most brilliant in our military history. The resources of the Marathas were not indeed large, either in the number of their men or in the amount of available munitions of war. The British were incomparably superior in both; and we had the further immeasurable advantage that a large part of our army consisted of Europeans, while our native regiments were led by European officers. But the Marathas were operating in their own country, and they were assisted by their own people. The leaders had in their retinue a considerable number of Arab mercenaries, who fought desperately on every occasion. And they had in their power the small British settlement at each court, and the few British traders in each district, whose situation at this time became extremely dangerous. In the case of Nagpúr, for instance, it was only a sudden sally, contrary to orders on the part of Captain Fitzgerald, which broke up the Maratha force that was about to attack the British Residency; even then it was not until a branch of the main army was sent that there was any real security.

But one by one the chiefs were defeated: the Peshwá was chased relentlessly as he fled from place to place, tracked all over the country by the dead and dying cattle he left on the road; and at length he was forced to surrender, protesting that he had never intended to fight. He was given a liberal pension, but deprived of all his powers; and with his capture the main issue of the war was brought to a successful end.

But the military operations which Hastings had planned

were still far from being accomplished. He had determined that this time nothing short of complete and absolute conquest was of any avail; there were to be no concessions to soothe wounded vanity, no paper treaties to be broken as soon as he had returned to Calcutta, no unconquered district which might serve as a centre for future rebellion when the army was withdrawn. The remains of the Pindaris were pursued to their obscure haunts, and captured; it was found that their great fear was lest they should be sent as prisoners to Europe, by which place they understood Calcutta. And the last leaders of the Marathas were pursued to those savage districts where, bereft of their following, they had taken refuge in the wild jungle-covered hills, among those dense unhealthy thickets in which the still uncivilised aboriginal inhabitants of India lurked hopelessly, and obtained a miserable subsistence by living on roots and herbs. There the Maratha chiefs had made common cause with the savages, and given them licence to plunder their late dominions. Had these not been suppressed, they would have become a permanent danger; but, in 1819, a concerted attack was made on the hills, and the last hiding-places of our conquered foes were destroyed.

In these stern punitive measures, which lasted for months after the regular fighting was finished, there was no question of generosity to a fallen enemy. It was the pacification of Western India that Hastings was striving for, and it was that which he accomplished. In subsequent years, there were occasional sporadic raids by those few Pindaris whose retreats had remained hidden from the eyes of the keenest of scouts; but their name had ceased to inspire terror. The greater part of the Maratha territories was annexed to British India; but some few provinces were given back to Holkar and Sindhia. Those chiefs had now, however, hardly even the shadow of their former power; and their intrigues were thenceforward as harmless as their animosity.

The whole fabric of the Maratha confederacy had now

utterly collapsed. But settlement after a war of such magnitude was a matter of some difficulty, for it affected far more than the conquered country, large as it was. So great a change in the political map of India touched the neighbouring states of Rajputana and Haidarábád as directly as the proper territories of the East India Company.

But Hastings proved a great statesman as well as an able soldier. Some fifty thousand square miles of country were brought under British rule, and four million subjects were thereby added to the British Empire. A detailed plan was laid down for the administration of this great expanse of territory. The people were to be protected from that foul parasite, the revenue farmer. No new taxes were to be imposed; neither were any old ones to be abolished, unless they were obviously unjust; but the existing taxes were to be levied according to the actual cultivation of the land, and not at the caprice of a zamindar. Further, no legal innovations were to be introduced: natives were to continue to administer the civil law, while the criminal law passed to British judges.

Elsewhere in the conquered countries, when annexation was considered inadvisable, the territory was either ceded to the Gaekwar of Baroda or the Nizam of Haidarábád, in exchange for other of their provinces which gave cohesion to the British possessions; or it was restored to the original native sovereigns, and a diplomatic agent established at each of their courts. Treaties of alliance were signed with all of the Maratha chiefs whom Hastings still permitted to rule; and the princes of Rajputana likewise sought his friendship.

In every case, the substance of the agreement was the same. The native promised his allegiance, and military service when required; the British guaranteed the integrity of his dominions, and at the same time stipulated that we should refrain from intervention in the internal affairs of such states.

In the main the agreements were faithfully kept on both

sides. It was, however, impossible in practice for the British agent at a native court to abstain from intervention in the not infrequent case of the rájá being hopelessly incompetent; still less could he maintain a neutral attitude when, as often happened, his advice was directly asked. In this respect the British did not adhere strictly to the treaties; the general good of the state was of more importance than the personal interest of its ruler and a pedantic observance of the letter of the agreement. As regards the native princes themselves, no power on earth, and no oath, however solemn, would have restrained some of them from the pleasantly dangerous game of intrigue; but there were many others who were glad of the British protection and the consequent security of their dominions, and who therefore abode honourably by the treaty and became loyal fiefs of the empire.

The great menace to the peace of India being thus averted by the destruction of the Maratha power, Hastings was free to turn his attention to the administration of the British provinces. Legal reform and the establishment of an educational system occupied much of his time during his last years in India. But he had now exceeded the average length of office of a Governor-General; and he had good reason to believe that the directors of the East India Company did not approve of his vigorous policy, triumphantly successful though it had been.

He was indeed thanked by his employers for his services, and his proffered resignation was refused. But in common decency they could not avoid the former tribute; as regards the latter, it is sufficient to say that they began to look out for a successor, and that their decision eventually fell on George Canning.

It may be doubted whether the choice was a wise one. Canning was a brilliant orator; but oratory in the House of Commons is no qualification for a Governor-General of India. His talents, great as they were in his own sphere of parlia-

mentary life, were by no means necessarily suited to the control of an oriental state; and this Canning himself seems to have recognised. The directors were probably influenced in their selection by the fact that he had discouraged the forward policy of Hastings, and his acceptance of the post would therefore have seemed to promise them some years of peaceful and profitable commerce, undisturbed by the alarms and expenses of punitive expeditions, and the enlargement of their already large dominions. But the chances of home politics determined Canning to remain in England; and when the Marquis of Hastings sailed from Calcutta, on 1st January 1823, it was to Lord Amherst that the reins of government were offered.

The new ruler arrived in August of the same year; and he had hardly called his first Council when war again broke out. This time, however, the conflict was not in India proper; Burma and Assam were the countries affected, and the sustained military operations which ensued were the cause of much surprise and regret to Amherst, who had hoped that the campaigns of Hastings had secured a long period of peace to India.[1] And even when the Burmese war was drawing to a close, the effect it had had in disturbing the great settlement of India that was made by Hastings, forced Amherst to engage in another punitive campaign against an old enemy in the middle of the peninsula.

Amherst, 1823.

It is a truism that the least check to a European army in Asia at once fosters a whole crop of native intrigue and sedition. In the Burmese War, indeed, the British had suffered no disaster. But the struggle was unusually lengthy; and to those who wished to believe that the British had suffered defeat, it was not difficult to misinterpret the prolonged absence of our troops on the Irawadi River.

Forthwith an extraordinary change came over the attitude of our native allies. Every item of news that could by any

[1] For the history of this war, see vol. viii.

possibility be construed as a reverse was eagerly seized upon and exaggerated. A general rumour spread from court to court that we should have to retire from Central India owing to the drain on our resources. Metcalfe, a member of the Supreme Council of Calcutta, stated that 'the Burmese War produced an extraordinary sensation all over India, amounting to an expectation of our immediate downfall.'

Nor was the disaffection merely passive. The great and growing confederacy of the Sikhs, whose dominions in the Punjab now adjoined the British provinces, assumed an overbearing tone. The last of the Pindari and Maratha outlaws ventured forth from their obscure hiding-places, scenting in the presumed weakness of the dominant power an opportunity for renewed plunder. And in the states administered under British supervision there was general discontent.

This latter sentiment was not, indeed, without foundation. It is true that our protection had benefited the inhabitants. Even the miserable country of Oudh was less miserable than before; for it was reported that a body of irregular horse marching through that land in 1824 could find no spot on which to encamp without injuring the crops; while in the following year travellers and officers alike called it a perfect garden. Everywhere agriculture had improved. But both our rule and our protection had brought disadvantages and abuses in their train. If there was now more land under cultivation, there was more grain produced than before; and the price of grain had naturally fallen as the supply increased. Some grumbling ensued thereon; a worse consequence was that the revenue system, which had been specially safeguarded to prevent tyranny, was inelastic in its operation, and a further unforeseen cause had made it oppressive.

The assessment was properly calculated on the price of grain. But it had been calculated when that price was inflated by the presence of a large military force; as soon as the army was withdrawn the price sank; and while there

was less demand, there was a larger supply. From a double reason the price therefore fell; but the assessment remained the same.

And to these grounds for discontent there was added another more potent, because more permanent factor. The British had given peace, security, and the beginnings of comparative prosperity to India. But for that very reason, paradoxical as it may appear at first sight, there was dissatisfaction. A not inconsiderable number of roving marauders found their occupation gone; and the paths of peaceful industry were utterly distasteful to them. The native princes found their treasury better supplied; but in the opinion of many this did not compensate for the loss of liberty and the delights of waging private war against their neighbours. And the subjects of those princes, who in truth were as yet the least important consideration, forgot, as it is natural to forget, the woes of the past in the woes of the present. They knew that taxation was oppressive; they did not remember that it had been extortionate. They knew that the price of grain had fallen, and that they had suffered because it had fallen; they forgot that previously they had often seen the whole of their crops carried off without hope of payment or redress. They remembered the few virtues of the older system, and forgot its vices; they saw distinctly the vices of the new system, and were oblivious of its virtues.

Matters came to a crisis when a dispute as to the succession of the throne at Bharatpur called for British intervention. At first Amherst hesitated; but Comber-

The Storm of Bharatpur, 1826.

more, an officer who had served against Napoleon in Spain, undertook to reduce that celebrated fortress. It was a dangerous moment for the English. They had already failed once before Bharatpur; and their failure had not been forgotten by the natives. If they failed again they would immediately have to face the probability, indeed, almost the certainty, that every subsidiary state from one

end of India to the other would repudiate its alliance, and engage in open rebellion; and it was known that the neighbouring Rajput and Maratha princes were secretly encouraging the usurping Rájá of Bharatpur.

The fortress was a formidable one, perhaps the most formidable of any in India. Its defences covered five miles; it was protected by thick and lofty walls of dried clay which rose from the edge of a broad and deep ditch; it was flanked by thirty-five tower-bastions, and strengthened by the outworks of nine gateways. High above the walls towered the bastions of the citadel, commanding the town of Bharatpur, the outer ramparts, and the surrounding plain; and the citadel itself was defended by a ditch fifty yards broad, fifty-nine feet deep, and filled with water.

A regular siege was impossible; Bharatpur could only be captured by storm. For two whole months it was bombarded without tangible results; but at length the walls began to crumble beneath the heavy fire of the British guns. Even then they seemed hardly less steep and inaccessible than before. But meanwhile the trenches of the attacking army had been advanced; several mines had been sprung; and the explosion of an enormous charge of ten thousand pounds of gunpowder in the chief mine, on 18th January 1826, shook the citadel to its foundation and effected a practicable breach.

The British immediately stormed the place. They were opposed at the point of the bayonet, and the Rájá's troops fought with magnificent bravery, disputing every foot of the advance. If the casualty list is correct, it conveys an idea of their devotion; for no fewer than 8000 of the enemy were killed and 6000 wounded. The British loss was 600.

On the following day the legitimate Rájá of Bharatpur was restored to the throne of his ancestors; and the fortress was dismantled. Its capture at once put an end to the incipient conspiracies of which the native courts had been full; for the fall of Bharatpur made it evident to the meanest intelli-

gence that the Burmese War had not weakened the power of the British in India.

The moral effect was deep and lasting. Now at length profound peace reigned throughout India; nor could any cloud of future war be discerned on the clear horizon. For twelve years the hand of the conqueror was utterly stayed, while the conquered abode in subjection; the age of pacific reform, for which every Anglo-Indian statesman had longed, but hitherto longed in vain, had come.

Peace and Reform.

And with the coming of that age a new era opened out for British India; an era which, though chequered by many great and terrible wars, though marked by a large extension of the already large territories of England in the East, was essentially one of peaceful development and ordered change.

The first period of British rule in India, which was a succession of almost unbroken conquests, was practically at an end when the victories of Hastings and Amherst were completed by the storm of Bharatpur.

The second period, which began with the administration of Bentinck in 1828, was not the less glorious or daring because the British now attempted to substitute moral for military conquest, because they endeavoured to impose the philosophic ideas, the culture, and the principles of modern Europe on the ancient and alien civilisations of India, and thus to transplant the restless soul of the West into the tranquil body of the East.

The third period began when the first unexpected results of that courageous experiment were visible in the early years of the twentieth century.

Book VIII

THE END OF THE WORLD-STRUGGLE: 1789-1815

CHAPTER I

THE UNITED KINGDOM

While Britain was conquering an empire in India, she was losing another empire in America. While she was subduing an alien race in the Orient, her own children were repudiating her dominion in the Occident; and at the very moment when soldiers and statesmen were advancing her flag in the tropics of Asia, the same flag was being torn down and trampled underfoot by the descendants of Englishmen on the other side of the world in the Imperial Civil War. But the western colonies had hardly been lost when the inexhaustible vitality of Britain was shown in the acquisition of fresh territories for the settlement of her people in Australia and South Africa; and the nation which was believed to be ruined by the disasters of the American War rose to a greater height than ever during the terrific contest with Napoleon in every quarter of the globe.

The Revolt of British America, 1776.

That contest was waged for the mastery of Europe and the outer world; and it ended, as the previous contest of the Seven Years' War had ended, in the triumph of Britain as the leading maritime and colonising power of the earth. The age during which this struggle took

The Revolutionary Age.

place was one in which commerce increased enormously, under the natural stimulus of mechanical inventions and improvements; even the wars produced their effect, as they forced up both prices and production. Science and discovery likewise made notable advances; but the real characteristic which distinguished this period from its predecessors in history was the revolutionary spirit that stamped its mark on every phase of life. Everywhere throughout the West men destroyed and reconstructed their ideas and their political theories with equal zeal; everywhere they threw off the allegiance which their fathers had owed to governments that no longer satisfied their views; authority was disregarded in the pursuit of freedom, and the new doctrine of the Rights of Man displaced the old doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings.

The American colonies of Britain led the way of revolution, in a rebellion against the tyranny of a government whose most arbitrary acts would never have provoked a murmur in any other country except England. The monarchs of France and Spain, unwilling to lose the opportunity of striking a blow against their old enemy Britain, assisted the Americans to obtain political independence; and within a few years the lesson of the American revolution had recoiled unexpectedly on their own heads. The King of France was deposed and executed during a revolution which surpassed the American rebellion in as great a degree as the power and population of France surpassed the power and population of British America. And the King of Spain, who had encouraged the colonies of another nation to rebel, saw his own colonies in South America throw off their allegiance to Spain one by one, in pursuit of the same independent and republican ideal that had animated the citizens of Boston and Connecticut.

The revolt of British America split an empire in twain and founded a new nation on the ruins of a civil war. The revolt

of Latin America likewise split an empire; but the Spanish colonies were possessed of none of the genius for political organisation which distinguished the founders of the northern republic, and the divided states of Spanish South America remain an unhappy example of the fate that would have overtaken the United States without the binding mortar of a Federal Constitution whose every word was respected by men to whom constitutional government was almost a religion.

The revolutionary impulse of France owed something to the teaching of English political philosophers, and something also to the example of the English rebels in America. But neither England nor America had ever known the evils to which France had been subject; and neither England nor America followed the path of revolt with such zealous fervour of destruction and reconstruction as the French.

The autocratic centralising policy that was introduced in France under Louis XI. had been rudely interrupted by the Renascence and the Reformation; but it was continued by Richelieu and carried to its logical conclusion by Mazarin and Louis XIV. For a time it seemed supremely successful, as France rose to the position of the leading military power in Europe, and became in some sense the leading power of the outer world as well. In England, on the contrary, a political freedom had been attained that was always unknown in France; the great civil struggles between the Stuarts and the nobility and people reduced the weight of the British Crown, while the monarchs of France were concentrating the whole rule of their kingdom in their own hands. And the cold, hard, unæsthetic puritanism that now counted for much in the political and social life of England, and at times even turned the scales in the decision of public affairs, had no part nor lot in the growth of the French intellect. The puritan of England was self-assertive in the presence of an earthly autocrat, where the

The French Revolution.

Frenchman as yet was mute; he was self-repressive before the authority of heavenly commands, where the Frenchman was reaching forward to throw off reverence to Bible, Church, and religion altogether.

But when Louis XIV. died in 1715 a gradual change came over the haughty nation that had despised its island neighbours across the Channel. The great monarch left an impoverished kingdom and a hungry peasantry as a monument of his fifty years' reign. The name of France, which had been revered throughout Europe as that of the leader of civilisation and culture, the centre of the arts, the seat of elegance, the chosen home of the muses, was indeed still so revered; but it was coupled with denunciations of the cruelty and faithlessness that had desolated the Palatinate, seized Strassburg in a time of profound peace, sown discord among the princes of the German Empire, unblushingly broken the most solemn treaties, revoked the edicts of religious toleration, and driven forth the Huguenots to starve or beg in foreign lands.

It was at such a time that some young Frenchmen came to England, and quickly drank in the spirit of liberty and free inquiry that was instinct in the nation. Despite the late struggle with the Stuarts, the country was prosperous. Despite the laws against the Nonconformists, toleration in religious matters was general. The press was seldom shackled. The most daring treatise on politics, on theology, on philosophy, might be published without fear. In France an unfortunate author was thrown into the Bastille, and his work seized as treasonable or heretical if it displeased the officials of the State or Church; in England the worst punishment that could befall the most wretched scribbler was to starve in Grub Street, or to achieve immortality in the biting couplets of the *Dunciad*. Corrupt and factious as was the public life of the age, it was at least better than the deathlike silence that reigned across the Channel; and the English constitutional

system moved the admiration of every French writer from Voltaire and Montesquieu to Benjamin Constant.

The new philosophers of France quickly assimilated the works of Bacon, Hobbes, Newton, and Locke, and interpreted them to their countrymen, and thence to the world at large. But at first even the bolder thinkers only attacked the Church in France. The monarchy remained untouched. Opinion, therefore, to that extent became free. Philosophical and scientific discussions were soon the fashion in Paris. Every aristocrat had a smile for the man of letters; every great lady's drawing-room was filled with a coterie of brilliant writers, this with his sarcasm on the theologians, that with his epigram on the Pope. The highborn laughed and applauded; their own order was not yet menaced.

But from the abuse of power by the priests to the abuse of power by the patricians was but a step. The first generation that struck at the clergy was succeeded by a second that struck at the crown; and the hour was favourable to an attack on the monarchy. France had been humbled at home and abroad. Her debts, her poverty, and her ambition had increased. The rule which Louis XIV. had always exercised with a certain magnificence was resigned by his grandson to a favourite mistress. A vague but deep discontent sprang up among the common people. They had long borne, with a patience not at all in accordance with our engrained ideas of the Gallic character, extortion, exaction, and oppression. Their scanty earnings had been heavily taxed by the King, the nobles, and the priests. Their sons had been sent to fight in Flanders, in Germany, in Spain, in America. At the least sign of a popular movement the leaders were flung into prison. Under the insidious principle of autocratic centralisation—a centralisation at once mean and extravagant, rotten and splendid—a brave high-spirited nation was being drained of its vitality, and sapped of its strength.

But revolt came before it was too late. Travellers and

students alike had for many years noticed the tendency to rise against oppression. Chesterfield wrote in 1753: 'All the symptoms I have ever met with in history previous to great changes and revolutions in government now exist, and daily increase in France.' Gibbon elucidated a point of Roman history from the disturbances he saw around him. What was visible to the stranger within the gates should not have been hidden from the French Government. But that Government was moribund. It could neither go honestly forward on the road of conciliation, nor courageously backward to the time-honoured repression. Like the lukewarm church cursed by the prophet of the Apocalypse, it was neither hot nor cold; and its fate was the same.

Unfortunately the wilder and more terrifying symptoms that not only the nineteenth century but our own times have known too well found also their chief inspiration, if not altogether their origin, in the French Revolution. While the fair hopes of freedom dawned in the movement that took for its motto Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity; while the generous sentiment of friendship with other nations broke out in the declaration that 'all peoples are our allies'; the baser sort saw their opportunity in the carnage, the terror, the confiscation. Organised anarchy raised her poisonous head. If the true reformers founded their resistance on the wishes of the people, the scum realised their profit in the rule of the mob. The vengeance that wreaks itself on any victim, disdaining justice and despising mercy, set its hideous example in the fanaticism of those who brought about the Reign of Terror; and the terror did not cease until it had sent over two thousand victims to the guillotine. But with the excesses of that dread tribunal, which slaughtered innocent victims at the rate of fifty or a hundred in a day by a process of judicial murder, France purged itself of the Revolution. It was the bloodthirstiness of men like Robespierre and Fouquier-Tinville that hurried on the reaction; but the real origin of the

Terrorists must be sought in the previous century of misrule.

The spirit of revolt that overturned the traditions of centuries in France was also manifesting itself in Britain, but in a far more orderly manner. The constitution was not abolished; the throne was strong enough to survive the temporary insanity of its occupant; the Church passed unmenaced through a period of inaction. But many of the ancient shibboleths were cast away, as the rising industrialism of the time forced the community into fresh methods of life; and if the problems that were thus solved were succeeded immediately by others as grave, there was at least no unwillingness to tackle them as soon as they were perceived.

Its Effect on Britain.

In literature the new school that was inspired by the French Revolution, which later gave birth to the Lakists, was energetic in its desire to shake off the fetters of rule and precedent that had bound the writers of the early eighteenth century. But the impulse lay in the time, and not in the men alone; for while Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Shelley were fired by the doctrines of freedom, Cowper in his quiet retreat at Olney had already felt the need before them; and Byron, disdainful as he always professed himself of those who had cast off the authority of Pope, was perhaps the most profoundly affected by, and the most brilliant member of, the new school.

In abstract thought, the scientific spirit which is the true basis of rationalism, and which, although somewhat strangely changed during the process, had itself furnished the motive power from which the whole movement of revolt was originally generated, was influenced in turn as the second renascence reacted on it and brought it new force. The real thinkers of the age were not the professed authors but the philosophers, using the word in its widest sense. Jortin and Warburton had already traversed the usually barren fields of controversy with success, and examined with

healthy scepticism the legends and miracles of the mediæval church. Gibbon pushed their conclusions further, and contrived by bitter sneer and unfair innuendo to poison the wound he inflicted on the faithful. Hume carried the battle directly into the citadel of religion with his masterly essays against miracles; while Paine, an unworthy camp-follower, travestied the higher arguments of the revolutionary school in books and pamphlets more fitted for the low taste of the general public.

But theology was receding more and more into the background, as the way of thought that had been inaugurated by Bacon began to be commonly accepted. The inductive school, which admitted nothing save what rested on the firm foundation of proven fact, was triumphant in England; and its work was brilliantly seconded by the deductive or theoretic school in Scotland. The two systems were the complement of each other: in the eyes of the practical English, there were few facts in the universe that did not need investigation, and their cause to be proved; in the eyes of the metaphysical Scots, few of those theories that had hitherto been accepted without hesitation by mankind were worthy of credence before full inquiry. And if there was at the time no man whose life marked a new epoch in scientific achievement, it is because every one who was engaged in such work was better pleased to advance a few steps securely in the road of knowledge, than to construct a vast and splendid edifice, in which perhaps his followers would find the foundation lacking. . . .

The reforming movement quickly made itself felt in politics and in the social life of the community. There were many attempts to purify and raise the tone of both the one and the other. While the synthetic movement continued which was still forcing small isolated communities to amalgamate into larger homogeneous bodies, there was evolved a new sense of responsibility in government, hitherto conspicuously absent, and a spirit, closely allied to the latter if not at

times absolutely identical, which we may call for want of a better name, the New Humanity.

The political life of the earlier eighteenth century had been corrupt and factious to a degree. National interests were lost sight of when those of party came in the way ; and party influences claimed every man of mark throughout the kingdom. It was the overpowering genius of the elder Pitt, here as in so many other directions, that showed the way to improvement. His Coalition Government broke down a few of the party barriers ; and if matters again reverted to their former state, it was at any rate shown that a great national crisis and a great national leader could temporarily override all opposition.

Parliament, too, had degenerated into a mere body of placemen, elected by a small caucus from districts that had frequently become of little account, owing to the migration of population : the House of Commons was thoroughly unrepresentative, and its members voted obediently for the wire-puller who could give the highest bribe. It should have been the pulse of the people : it was, in fact, out of sympathy with their feelings, and selfishly bent on gaining its own ends. Again it was Pitt who saw the need of reform in the electoral system. He sketched out a project which should again bring Parliament into touch with national life ; and although his schemes miscarried owing to the force of outside events, and the combined opposition of every vested interest, and every simple reactionary or mere sentimental admirer of the past, the seed he had let fall was not thrown away. It germinated and grew in strength, resulting eventually in the Reform Bill of 1832, and the further extensions of the franchise which have taken place since then. Burke, too, by his measure cutting down the public pension list, by reducing the secret service money, and by checking financial extravagance in the administration, not only reduced the burden of taxation, but lessened the opportunities for political corruption—a more important point.

The next generation went further still. The younger Pitt brought to an end the anomalous and unjust minority Parliament that had sat at Dublin, and by the act of 1801 Ireland was joined to Great Britain: it was his wish, also, to sweep away the laws against those who did not profess the tenets of the Church of England. In this he was unsuccessful, since the thought was too advanced for the age; but although defeated for the moment, the idea was never abandoned, and another few years saw the abolition of all but a few of the religious tests as a qualification for public life.

These reforms at home have little to do with the British colonies, save in so far as any improvement at the heart of the empire must of necessity circulate after a time through each of the other members; but of vital importance to the dependencies was the movement that brought out a sense of responsibility for the possessions overseas, a movement that grew later into a new feeling of brotherhood with those inhabiting them.

Imperial Responsibility.

There could, indeed, be little enthusiasm about the colonies for many years after the Imperial Civil War. The old English settlements across the Atlantic had revolted. Canada was looked upon as a half-frozen province of indefinite extent, that had been saved from the wreck of the rebellion by a curious freak of fate. Australia was believed to be a dismal and half-desert island, which providence had judiciously placed on the other side of the world in order that British criminals, when transported thither, should find no possible means of returning. Cape Colony was considered a valueless possession.

But the position with regard to India was very different. The astounding conquests of a few years had left the British practically masters of the whole country. Every feeling of curiosity had been roused by the reports of its wealth and magnificence; every noble sentiment had been roused by the helpless condition of its inhabitants, who were too often a

prey to the rapacity of the East India Company and its officials; every instinct of justice had been roused by the feeling that a commercial corporation, whose first thought must necessarily be its own profit and the earning of dividends for its own stockholders, ought not to be finally answerable for the government, as well as the trade, of the huge possession that had unexpectedly fallen into its hands.

There are few finer passages in our history than the gradual awakening to a realisation of the responsibility that seemed to be placed upon the English people by God Himself as the duty of the strong towards the weak, the healthy towards the sick; a responsibility that was soon seen to apply equally to the care of the other alien peoples within the empire, to the wretched African slave of the West Indies, to the aboriginal American whom our advance in Canada drove ever further westwards, to the native Australian who dies so quickly before the white man, to the native South African whose increase is quicker than our own.

It is this feeling which we call the New Humanity. Its workings were to be seen also in England, in attempts to elevate the condition of the lowest classes, by giving the children some instruction in the Sunday or Ragged Schools then recently founded; in an improvement some years later of the legal system, partly by abolishing the old prisons with their filthy arrangements and herding together of all degrees of criminals, partly by reduction of some of those barbarously severe sentences which disgraced the English law; partly in the eventual introduction of new and still tentative methods of punishment devised to do away with the old penal arrangements which neither reformed nor deterred.[1]

[1] Another aspect of the increasing humanitarian sentiment of the age is too often passed over in silence; I refer to its care for the lower animals, and to the attempts that were now made to suppress cruelty in sport and in the treatment of beasts of burden. In the year 1822, 'The first law ever enacted in any country for the interest of the brute creation'—I quote Sir Herbert Maxwell—was passed through Parliament by Richard Martin, the member for Galway, who was the leading spirit in the

The Poet of the New Humanity.

It was fitting that the first voice of the New Humanity should be that of the melancholy recluse, whose clouded, unhappy existence, albeit passed amid the peaceful lanes and gardens of Bedfordshire, made him sympathise with the lot of the helpless and oppressed in every quarter of the globe. Years before Burke thundered against Warren Hastings in Westminster Hall, years before Wilberforce introduced his proposals for the emancipation of the slaves, the poet Cowper, far apart from the strife and the turmoil in which men of iron were ruthlessly building up the great empire overseas, had condemned in his verse the excesses of those victors who filled India with terror, and the cruelties of those masters who saw in the African negro merely a cheap and continuously reproductive source of labour :—

'Hast thou, though suckled at fair freedom's breast,
Exported slavery to the conquered East?
Pulled down the tyrants India served with dread,
And raised thyself, a greater, in their stead?
Gone thither armed and hungry, returned full,
Fed from the richest veins of the Mogul,
A despot big with power obtained by wealth,
And that obtained by rapine and by stealth?

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formation of the beneficent Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The name of this excellent man deserves to be better remembered than it is.

It is significant of the tendency of public opinion that Coleridge's lines on the subject are dated in the year 1797 :—

'He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.
He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.'

I may be mistaken; but I have always thought that the growth of this sentiment in the Victorian age is a more conclusive proof of the real progress of civilisation than many of its vaunted achievements in utilitarian invention. And the English nation, which is sometimes believed by envious foreigners to count wife-beating among its cheaper and more popular domestic amusements, may perhaps take a little credit to itself for the lead it has given the world in the suppression of wanton cruelty to animals.

With Asiatic vices stored thy mind,
But left their virtues and thine own behind;
And having trucked thy soul, brought home the fee,
To tempt the poor to sell himself to thee?'

In such lofty tones of reproach did he repudiate the misdeeds of the East India Company and its agents. Equally emphatic was he as regards slavery:—

'I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth,
That sinews bought and sold have ever earned. . . .
We have no slaves at home.—Why then abroad? . . .
Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free,
They touch our country, and their shackles fall.
. . . Spread it then,
And let it circulate through every vein
Of all your empire; that where Britain's power
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy, too.'

Throughout all his work the same voice of humanity rises; whether regretting the tyranny of the strong over the weak, or protesting against the 'detested sport that owes its pleasure to another's pain.' At times he exaggerates, as when he merely echoes the vulgar clamour which pictured Clive with 'overgorged and bloated purse,' or believes that British extortion in the East had made 'our arch of empire a mutilated structure soon to fall'; or again, in saying that, 'doing good, disinterested good, is not our trade'; but in spite of all the excesses and the abuses he condemns, he still has faith in his country, and 'her magnificent and awful cause.'

Excellences and Defects of the New Humanity.

Cowper was the perfect type and symbol of the New Humanity, alike in its excellences and its defects. A text might be found in his poems for all the causes it championed in its earlier days. That stern moral indignation, that desire to redress abuses and to wipe out foul stains, whatever and wherever they may be, which has given the New Humanity its most splendid

victories, were possessed in no small measure by the man who was too timorous to read aloud in public. That fellow-feeling with the downtrodden, that sympathy with the afflicted and the poor, that charity for the suffering, which has made the New Humanity a power of such incalculable good to England and the world, were all possessed by the man who petted a hare for years and wrote an elegy on its death.

But the spirit of exaggeration which we have noticed in Cowper was unfortunately also destined to be typical of the New Humanity. Relying on the heart at least as much as on the head, to it belonged all the defects that spring from exuberant but ill-balanced sympathy. If any cause it attacked was bad, therefore all those connected, however remotely, with that cause, and however much above reproach their character might be in other respects, were also bad. To a passion for doing good, it united a passion for vilifying its opponents. Ever ready to check evil, it saw evil everywhere. It magnified small abuses and the petty follies of mankind into mountains, and cried to have them removed. It attacked with intemperate vehemence; and although its victories were not counted to England for righteousness, its foolishness was readily and not unjustly reckoned abroad as a national characteristic. That more or less unconscious hypocrisy, which has frequently made us a laughing-stock among other nations, and which sprang originally from puritanism, drew fresh strength from the New Humanity. The ineffable outpourings of pseudo-progressives and self-styled reformers; the dogmatic intemperance of temperance societies; the petty obsessions of the minor religious sects; the cherished inanities of the over-righteous everywhere: all alike are manifestations of the New Humanity run to seed.[1]

These are the smaller evils; others greater have come

[1] The scepticism which Mr. Samuel Weller, Senior, expressed regarding the precise value to the negroes of flannel waistcoats and moral pocket handkerchiefs, might be extended to a number of other more or less philanthropic enterprises without doing harm.

from the very warmth of that feeling for the less advanced races which has given the cause itself its highest triumphs. While sympathising nobly with those who were oppressed by civilised man; while assuming, without hope of reward, and indeed with great prospect of misconstruction being put on their aims, the task of protecting the undeveloped man against the developed: there was too much of a tendency to forget that an irremovable chasm of thousands of years separated the two. The less informed exponents of the New Humanity indulged glibly in cheap vapourings about the equality and the relationship of all mankind, and they did considerable harm by their failure to perceive that the problem raised altogether deeper issues than could be covered by the mere unproved assertion.

Frequently it was ignorance, occasionally lack of common sense, and at times a curious anti-national bias, that caused them to err. If it was a matter of Indian government they were considering, they saw no distinction between the demon-worshipping Dravidian, the high-caste Hindu, and the war-like Sikh; all were alike 'fellow-men,' and all should have a vote; if they were not immediately fitted for it, they must be educated up to it. It was not realised that such education was a matter not of generations, but of centuries; and it was not foreseen that the sole outcome of a parliament composed of such various groups, none of whom had previously shown the faintest desire for representative institutions, would be general anarchy.

The same thing occurred in South Africa. Some of those who were loudest in their desire to 'elevate our negro brethren,' included under that term as equals the brave Zulu and the stunted Hottentot, the Kafir and the Matabele; none of whom in fact are negroes at all, and each of whom differ from each other at least as much as the Saxon from the Slav. That did not matter to the enthusiast; they were freed from slavery; they must have the franchise. The

same quack medicine was expected to cure them all of a disease of which none were conscious.

These, and other excrescences of the New Humanity, have done it harm in the eyes of moderate and unprejudiced men. Yet it would be absurdly unjust to set off the occasional follies of a school of thought against the solid services it has rendered. The New Humanity, in fact, runs through all our recent history as a purifying, elevating influence. Had it not been for its working, we should indeed have avoided some mistakes in general polity; but we should never have created the Indian imperial system, and we should never have abolished slavery. The two achievements, the former practical and constructive, the latter idealist and rightly destructive, were more than sufficient to outweigh the errors of a century of faddists.

Reform in India.

For the first time since her connection with Asia, England as a whole began to take an interest in Indian affairs, when the news of Clive's and Hastings' victories reached home. Commerce had brought the East nearer to England.[1] In a higher sense, too, the connection between

[1] The course of trade by way of the Cape is referred to in *Tristram Shandy*, and it is suggested that Indian doctrines, which began to be discussed in Europe at this period, also came by the same route. An allusion to the East was no longer pedantic in a novel. Fielding speaks of 'the Bannians in India, who dedicate their whole lives to the preservation and protection of certain animals,' and compares them sarcastically with English game-preservers. Miss Burney makes her Captain vow to Evelina that he would sooner go into the Black Hole of Calcutta than accompany a party to Ranelagh. The 'Club' often debated the affairs of Asia; and Johnson, who could see nothing but savages and scoundrels in America, recovered his sanity when other parts of the world were mentioned. An anecdote of fortune hunters in the East Indies was told among them with immense gusto in 1776; the custom of going there to make wealth was alluded to again in 1778, and was no doubt a frequent subject of jest. Johnson, as became one of the old Tories, defended the system of caste; he had once met Warren Hastings, and wrote two letters to him; a discussion on his policy is preserved in Boswell's *Life*. No play of the period was complete without the figure of the wicked Englishman who extorted untold wealth from trembling natives, and returned home to be tortured by a bad conscience and an equally bad liver for the rest of his days.

Orient and Occident appealed to idealists such as Burke, who saw 'one of the races of the North-West cast into the heart of Asia new manners, new doctrines, new institutions.'

But as the political power of the East India Company increased, it became evident to the deeper thinkers of the age, that a body of commercial men could not be permitted to continue the government of subject nations under the same conditions that had been sufficient when they were solely a trading corporation. If the great successes won by Clive and Hastings filled people with pride, the means by which they had been won were condemned.

In the splendid simile of Burke, the British Parliament claimed 'an imperial character in which as from the throne of heaven she superintends all the several inferior legislatures, and guides and controls them all, without annihilating any.' As regards America, the Stamp Act and the Imperial Civil War showed how much his boast was worth. If the orator's magnificent phrase were not ever to remain unmeaning rhetoric, the opportunity to fulfil it came when India passed into English hands.

That opportunity was not neglected; but the reasons which induced Parliament to intervene in the government of India were typical of the spirit that animated the New Humanity. The factions and dissensions among the directors of the East India Company were of little importance to any one save the shareholders; and the latter were quite capable of looking after themselves. Neither was it the fact that the Company required a loan from the State which brought about the change, although that of itself gave Parliament the right to a voice in Indian affairs. It was the knowledge that much of the wealth brought home had neither been made in trade, nor fairly derived from revenue, that first roused general disapproval; and when part of the wretched story of rapacity leaked out, and to it was added the appalling accounts of the Bengal famine, together with the suspicion that the Com-

pany's servants not only did nothing to check it, but actually made money out of the miseries of those who had become their subjects: the combined effect of these abuses forced Parliament to take part in the government of India.

The horrible accounts that reached England were in many cases overdrawn, and no justification was discovered for the belief that the Company had profited by the famine: but the New Humanity, with that tendency to exaggeration which we have remarked, was not too careful in the instances of abuse it quoted. But a storm of indignation was aroused by facts which could not be denied; and measures were quickly taken to relieve the Company of part of that responsibility of which it had shown itself unworthy, and which it was indeed impossible for it to exercise with impartiality and due regard both for its own interests and those of the natives of India.

Not until after the Mutiny of 1857 did England take over the entire direction of Indian government; but from the first Regulating Act of 1773 it was recognised as a principle that the ultimate responsibility for the great dependency lay with the nation, and not with the Company.

Had it not been so, it may safely be said that we should not have possessed India to-day. The strength of the Company unsparingly exercised, the tyranny of the West unsparingly imposed on the East, might have preserved it for a few years. Men like Clive and Hastings might have found successors, brilliant, unscrupulous, and daring as they. But had the East India Company been allowed to continue as an oriental autocrat, no Bentinck would have adorned the splendid list of Governors-General; no Canning would have balanced with even justice the scales between East and West after the great outbreak of 1857; none of that broad policy of social and industrial improvement throughout India, in which are blended with careful hand the complex, contrasted civilisations of Orient and Occident, would have been inaugurated:

for no private trading company could or would have undertaken it.

Sooner or later, the English East India Company must have been driven from India: and the history of our connection with Asia, instead of being a source of legitimate pride to every Englishman, would have been a shame, a reproach, and a stain; for it would have told of opportunities missed such as have presented themselves to few other nations, of a sordid incapacity to rise above the level of business, to grasp anything but the immediate profits of trade; it would have shown that, though possessed of the strength of arm to conquer, we had not the strength of character to rule; and the tears of the ruined provinces of the East, mingled with the curses of our own revolted colonies in the West, would have been a sign and a warning for ever that the terrible but just vengeance of God and of man had at length overwhelmed those who, being free themselves, could yet rivet the chains of slavery on others, and dare to order their goings on the earth with no thought save for the amount of profit they could extort from the forced labour of nations weaker than their own.

From such a peril the New Humanity saved us, as it awakened a sense of responsibility for the welfare of those who had been brought under our rule. That magnificent ideal of empire was gradually evolved, which postulates that every citizen stands free among his fellows, and equal before the law, without distinction of race or creed, of wealth or title; and it is as a living symbol of that ideal that the British Empire exists to-day. It is not, indeed, yet fully realised in practice. But in the first half of the eighteenth century it was not realised at all; we have already seen in a previous chapter that England was unconscious of being a world-power, at the very time when her victories had made her the leader of the outer world. Slowly with the disaster that overtook them in the West our people realised their responsibilities; and from that time they have never turned back, even though

they have occasionally groaned under the burden, even though there have been days when it has seemed too heavy to be borne.

Slave Emancipation.

About the same time that the responsibility of England for the government of India was brought home to her, the full iniquity of the traffic in African slaves was revealed to a few men, who, to their honour and our own, would not rest until negro emancipation was an accomplished fact.[1]

Wilberforce and the Evangelicals.

The chief author of the agitation for abolishing slavery was William Wilberforce. Others had expressed their opinion as to the evil wrought by the traffic in slaves before him, and, indeed, he never claimed to be the first of the Abolitionists. We have seen that Cowper protested in verse against the wrong, and Burke was convinced as early as 1780. But Wilberforce was undoubtedly the real working head of the cause, and his life sums up in essentials the whole philanthropic movement of the time. From his published writings it is evident how entirely that movement originated in religious conviction, and was the work of the celebrated Evangelical school of which he was a leading member.

That school it is easy enough to criticise in a depreciatory fashion. Many of its leading spirits were prosy and pompous, and overgiven to congratulating the Almighty that he had created them so good, after the manner amusingly satirised by Thackeray. They were narrow and dogmatic, inheriting in this much of the old puritan tradition. They were afraid of the lighter side of life, fearing the influence of the devil in the most innocent diversions. Wilberforce himself was no exception, as his correspondence shows. He abominated 'the playhouse' as 'directly contrary to the laws of God'; he considered concerts and balls as 'vanities'; he gave up singing as a dangerous accomplishment. Few examples

[1] For a full account of the abolition of the slave trade and the emancipation of the slaves, see the fourth volume of this work.

could show better the completeness with which the Evangelicals were imbued with the unæsthetic tastes of the puritans. He held to the full those strict views as to the observance of Sunday which have done so much to make the day of rest a day of listless idleness, or even worse, in Britain: he was horrified by the easier Catholic doctrine that recreation might be indulged in after the morning devotions were concluded. He even reproached himself that he was 'not half strict enough,' when one of his friends doubted. The most trivial incident of life he turned to some moral purpose, and his intimate correspondence was full of precepts. 'Many would call this a sermon rather than a letter,' he once wrote: and the remark was true of almost all his epistles.

With the narrowness of puritanism, the Evangelical had also the unctuous phraseology of the Methodist. Such remarks as 'piety is a lovely spectacle in youth' were frequent among them: the whole world was summed up in like fashion. Even Bowdler, self-appointed cleanser of the Augean stables of English literature, was 'very pleasing and pious'; the man whose expurgations of Shakespeare now savour both of absurdity and artistic sacrilege was a shining light among the earlier Evangelicals.

The school hated Catholicism with undying hate. The most deliberately offensive epithets were chosen to describe the oldest form of Christianity. At their headquarters in Clapham the air was thick with denunciations of the 'scarlet woman'; the Pope was identified with anti-Christ, until the rising star of Napoleon caused a heresy among the commentators, by making it possible for a parallel to be drawn between the French Emperor and the awful scourge of the Apocalypse. Those who consider that Thackeray exaggerated, when he drew Mrs. Newcome's anger at young Tom's desire to marry a 'papist,' have only to turn to Wilberforce's correspondence to see that the novelist has, if anything, undercoloured the picture. Although aware that Catholi-

cism was the established creed of Haiti, the apostle of emancipation would not recognise it even as a corrupt form of his own religion, for he desired to seize 'the inconceivably important opportunity of sowing Christianity' there. This he proceeded to do by sending out to the negroes 'great varieties of excellent little works.' As they were written in English, a language the natives could not understand, they probably fell on even more stony ground than the majority of tracts, a form of propaganda peculiarly affected by the Evangelicals.

The shortcomings of the school are thus patent: they must not blind us to its excellences. Those who composed it were honest and God-fearing men, anxious to do the right, and, as such, zealously striving to propagate their own form of religion through the world. Wilberforce was working for the establishment of Christianity in Australia in 1786, almost before there were any settlers there; he was interested in the missions of Bengal; he wished to 'convert, civilise, instruct, and attach' the Irish; he encouraged the project of founding a library in Nova Scotia, in order to minimise the evil results of 'French philosophy' in that country; he gave advice to the rulers of Haiti relative to religion and Sunday observance which fills many pages of his voluminous correspondence.

It must be confessed that little success attended many of these efforts. The peculiarly drab garments in which Evangelical Christianity was clothed were not calculated to make it attractive to everybody; and the way in which it discountenanced amusements and encouraged an unnatural solemnity would alone have caused its eventual rejection. But in endeavouring to convert all mankind, the Evangelicals were but obeying, according to their lights, the command of their divine master. Many of the great missionary societies were founded by them at this time; indeed, philanthropic societies of all kinds began to flourish, from the

British and Foreign Bible Society, to those for the improvement of prison discipline, the reformation of juvenile offenders and public morality, the diffusion of information on capital punishment, and a hundred others.

The abolition of slavery was thus not by any means the sole object of Wilberforce's life: but from about the year 1786, when a correspondent mentions 'the humane subject that lately interested you,' until his final success, it occupied more and more of his time. Young and earnest, a gentleman of fortune with all the brilliant society of the metropolis open to him, he turned away from the career that most men in his position would have chosen, in order to work for others. He was only twenty-eight years of age when he broached the subject of slave emancipation to his friend, William Pitt the younger. 'At length I well remember,' he wrote many years later, 'after a conversation in the open air at the root of an old tree at Holwood, just above the steep ascent into the vale of Keston, I resolved to give notice on a fit occasion in the House of Commons to bring the subject forward.'

From the day on which he stood by that spot, itself one of the most perfect examples of the peaceful English countryside, an organised agitation was carried on throughout the kingdom. The entry 'slave business' continually recurs in his diary. There are few of his letters but have some reference to it.

The task before him was an arduous one, since he proposed to destroy a powerful and wealthy commercial interest, and very quickly he and his friends 'began to perceive more difficulties in the way than he had hoped there would be.' But for forty-five years there was no slackening: and in the next century, when the flood-gates of reform were opened, during the great peace, the Bill for the emancipation of the slaves was at last passed through Parliament in 1833. Wilberforce only lived to hear that it had been read a second time, but by then its passage was assured; and he died

blessing God that the labours of his life had been crowned with victory.

Thus was the doctrine of British responsibility for the non-British races within the empire extended from those who lived in India only to those who lived in every part of our territories. From that time the people of Great Britain have been directly responsible for the welfare of all the non-British inhabitants in every colony that has not itself received responsible government; in the latter the responsibility has naturally been delegated to the colonists themselves.

Unfortunately it cannot be said that success in this connection has always been marked; neither can it be claimed that all the colonies have seen their responsibility in the same light, nor that the intervention of the mother country has always been inspired by wisdom,—a divergence of view caused by the varying status of the aboriginal races and the extent of their power, as shown by the differences in the amount of their vitality and productiveness.

Such were the first, and among the greatest, victories of the New Humanity. But as we look back over the nineteenth century, we can perceive its influence working in almost every direction; and it would be difficult to discover any movement, even at the present day, whose origin cannot be traced, directly or indirectly, to the thought of the period between the end of the Seven Years' War and the close of the struggle with Napoleon. All those attempts to alleviate the burden of life for the weak, to make it higher and ampler for the strong; to redress, as was the splendid task of the fabled knights-errant of chivalry, the wrongs of those afflicted by the hand of man; to succour those who have been hit by the pitiless economic forces of the age; all the endeavours to obtain more equal opportunities for those whom the accident of birth has disqualified or the general course of events has handicapped; all the philanthropic work of the last century, and the semi-socialistic experiments that are

warmly debated among us to-day: all alike spring from that New Humanity whose workings were first visible in the indignation of Cowper and Burke at the crimes committed by their countrymen in the Orient.

CHAPTER II

THE EUROPEAN WAR: 1793-1814

On a fair day in summer, when the air is joyous with the laugh of children, the song of birds, the hum of insects on their various errands, when the sweet-scented hay lies new mown but yet ungathered on the fields, and the standing crops wave bearded in a sea of green that shows some touch of ripening gold; on such a day the skies will sometimes darken suddenly as a storm swells up against the breeze. Silent are the children and the birds as the tempest gathers force and beats upon their hasty refuge; the new mown ungathered hay is ruined by a flood of rain; the sturdy stems of wheat and barley are dashed confusedly to earth, carrying in their fall the truant scarlet poppy that has grown with them in happier hours. The sun may shine again upon the morrow; but the widowed fields must wait the wooing of another summer ere they bear.

The familiar catastrophes of nature are sometimes paralleled in history; and such a parallel occurred in Europe towards the close of the eighteenth century. An assured and permanent period of peace seemed to have dawned upon an unquiet world at the beginning of the French Revolution. A more friendly sentiment prevailed between France and England at that time than had been known since the opening of the Hundred Years' War. The patriots of Paris intertwined the flags of France, Britain, and America, and paraded the thoroughfares crying, 'Vivent les trois peuples

libres!' Moderate men looked for the end of their country's travails neither in the despotism of the monarchy nor in the anarchism of the Mountain, but in a constitution modelled on that of England.

And across the Channel these feelings of amity were heartily reciprocated. The growing influence of the New Humanity was entirely opposed to war; nor was there any ground for a war between two nations which had but recently settled their quarrels in a comprehensive treaty of peace. Both political parties in Britain were united in wishing for good relations with France, if they were united in nothing else. 'To suppose any nation can be unalterably the enemy of another is weak and childish,' cried the younger Pitt when he was taunted with forgetting the traditional policy of England in opposing her continental neighbour. He argued great things from the popular risings that heralded the French Revolution; he refused to countenance the schemes of invasion that were being concocted between the royalist refugees of the French aristocracy and the rulers of Austria and Prussia. And when he found that the leaders of the revolutionary party in Paris were anxious for a better understanding with England, he gave still warmer welcome to a change which, whatever its excesses, seemed about to end the jealousy and strife that had existed between the two nations for seven hundred years. 'The French Government,' he declared in Parliament, 'is bent on cultivating the most unbounded friendship with Great Britain.'

Unhappily the tree of mutual goodwill thus so fairly planted and so carefully watered, bore none save the bitterest fruit. The old distrust of France again broke out in England as the Revolution descended into terrorism amd massacre; the old distrust of England again sprang up in France as the suspicion grew that the British Government were engaging in an intrigue to destroy the Republic. In a wild passion of rhetorical invective, Edmund Burke deplored the loss of

continuity, of gradual social evolution in France, 'without which,' he declared, 'men would become like flies in a summer'; and he saluted the leaders of the Revolution as 'the ablest architects of ruin who have hitherto existed in the world. In a short space of time they have pulled to the ground their army, their navy, their commerce, their arts, and their manufactures.' In equally wild words French demagogues declared that Pitt's gold and Pitt's diplomacy were preparing a general attack on the Republic.

The suspicions on either side were indeed unfounded. But they were none the less sufficient to destroy the transient feelings of amity between France and England. The clouds had gathered for the coming storm; yet none realised how terrible and how prolonged would be the tempest which succeeded the fickle calm.

Pitt still strove for peace, while the two nations stood angrily fronting each other; but when France turned on the world at large, confident in the belief that the whole world was ready to crush her new-found liberties, the diplomacy of Pitt was helpless. The French Republic declared war in February 1793; Britain followed suit with a similar declaration in the following month. The fair hopes of the brotherhood of man died out as the cannon rumbled again across Europe.

The Outbreak of War, 1793.

But fortune seemed to have turned from France. Her armies were unpaid, unfed, unclothed. At home, all was chaos. The civil servants had received no salary for months. The revenue was uncertain. The paper currency was discredited. The Directorate had become ridiculous. The whole machinery of the Republic had broken down in its eighth year of existence. The people were dangerously agitated; and it was likely to go ill with any one who attempted to control them. The last agonised cry of Danton from prison was still a warning to the surviving statesmen of the Revolution: 'They are all brothers of Cain. . . . O, it were

better to be a poor fisherman than to meddle with the governing of men.'

Other nations now anticipated, with some appearance of probability, the dissolution of France. But they had forgotten the phœnix-like power of rising from their own dead ashes which the French had shown in the past; they had forgotten, as Burke had also forgotten, that those who destroy can sometimes rebuild the fallen fabric better than before.

In this desperate crisis, Napoleon Buonaparte became First Consul of the Republic on 25th December 1799, and within a few weeks the whole complexion of events had changed. The strong hand of a master was at once evident in home and foreign affairs. A proclamation was immediately issued declaring the reign of disorder at an end: 'The Revolution is finished.' The truth of the bald statement was witnessed by a series of drastic changes. A new constitution was adopted. The internal administration was revised. The horrible festival of the execution of the king, which had shocked many even of those who were not royalists, was abolished. Every citizen was free to quit or return to the Republic at his will.

Napoleon Buonaparte, 1799.

With an amnesty for the past, the future immediately brightened. The funds rose steadily from twelve to forty francs, and at times touched still higher. The State began to pay its creditors in money. A National Bank was founded. The great roads, that had fallen into decay during the troubles of the last ten years, were repaired. The brigands that infested the country were repressed. Systems of canalisation, the last works begun under the old administration, were completed. The first efforts towards a codification of the laws were made. New schools, the germs of the present day lycées, were instituted. Peace was made with the Church.

Confidence was restored in the army when the French troops under Buonaparte were again successful in Italy,

Germany, and Austria. Their victories culminated at Hohenlinden, which laid Vienna open to the republican army. Austria was forced to consent to peace, and the Treaty of Lunéville left the First Consul free to turn his attention to England.

He had already made an offer of peace, which Pitt had sternly refused. But Pitt was now no longer in office, and in his place was Addington, a man of very different calibre. Through the defeat of Austria, England had lost her chief ally. France had dictated her own terms to Europe. Her troops were drawn up threateningly as if to cross the Channel. Popular anxiety was rife at the prospect of invasion, and it was deepened by discontent and the scarcity of food.

The Peace of Amiens, 1802.

As the war stood, indeed, the gains of England had been great. She had seized every foreign colony that her navy could reach. Her commerce had risen by leaps and bounds. Her imports in 1781 had been over twelve millions sterling; in 1799 they were nearly thirty millions sterling. Her exports had been even more progressive. In 1781 the total had been seven and a half millions; in 1799 it was nearly thirty-four millions.

But the enormous gains were balanced by the drain of the war. The best seamen of the country were impressed for the naval service. The subsidies to foreign powers were endless. The increased taxation and the national debt weighed heavily. Much even of the commercial gain was the result of unhealthy stimulation and the necessity for war material. On every hand was heard the cry for peace, and the most level-headed men in the country felt it better to secure a settlement while the advantages were still on the British side, rather than push France to extremities and run the risk of losing all that eight years' strife had brought.

Pourparlers were accordingly opened, and the negotiations ended in the signature at Amiens, on 25th March 1802, of a

treaty which brought the conclusion of the maritime war. By its terms England kept India, Ceylon, and Trinidad. She restored the Cape of Good Hope, Demerara, Barbice, Essequibo, and Surinam to Holland: Martinique and Guadeloupe to France: Minorca to Spain. She was to evacuate Malta under a guarantee of its neutrality by the powers. Porto-Ferraio and Elba were restored to France, and the latter was to evacuate Egypt.

The news of the conclusion of peace was the signal for outbursts of enthusiasm in both countries. The French were welcomed in London. Crowds of English gentlemen travelled at once to Paris to see the new France of the Revolution. Fox was received by Buonaparte in friendly and almost affectionate intercourse.

In England the trading classes now looked forward to a reduction of taxation and an unbounded extension of wealth. And statesmen were again ready to take up the schemes of reform that had perforce fallen through at the outbreak of hostilities.

Across the Channel, in the midst of the rejoicings at the peace, the settlement of France at home, and the extension of her power abroad, there was no thought save one of gratitude to the First Consul, who in two years had rescued the State from bankruptcy and defeat. The future seemed serene; only one solitary philosopher, remembering a parallel from the ancient world that fitted too well, remarked: 'This young man begins like Cæsar: I fear he also will end like him. . . .'

The Napoleonic Empire.

But the peace of Amiens was but a truce,—and a truce that was kept for a few months only. At first, indeed, the settlement seemed lasting. Buonaparte turned from war to civil administration, with the determination to complete the restoration of order at home. His enmity to England had apparently disappeared. Once he even went so far as to express the hope of a cordial alliance between France, mistress of the land, and England, mistress

of the sea. But the overbearing temper of the First Consul, now Consul for life, and the natural distrust of him in England, soon shattered the peace. The Cabinet in London refused to give up Malta until the promised guarantee that it should be left neutral was secured. The well-founded suspicion that further plans were forming for the reduction of Egypt and Syria seemed to be confirmed by a report published in the official organ of the Republic, the *Moniteur*. Still other schemes had been conceived for the extension of French power in India. On the continent, the new governments that had been set up in Piedmont, Switzerland, and Holland became mere tools of Napoleon.

When the English ministers protested, they were answered insultingly with a demand for the expulsion of the French refugees in London, the suppression of the newspapers which criticised Napoleon, and the immediate evacuation of Malta. The British ambassador at Paris was obliged to intimate that language which might be used to a small power could not be addressed to the United Kingdom, that the right of refuge on British shores was inviolable, that the freedom of the press was a constitutional maxim, and that Malta was only held until proper securities for its independence were received.

But remonstrance of any sort merely exasperated Napoleon. His tone became still more warlike. 'In less than two years,' he had said to his companions after the battle of Marengo in 1800, 'I have conquered Cairo, Milan, Paris; and if I died to-morrow I should not have half a page to myself in a universal history.' Since the peace, however, he had seemed to put away the ambition to go down to posterity as a great conqueror. But now his temper changed. He was heard to utter that after all his destiny was war. To the British representative he declared, 'If you wish for war, you have only to say it—we will make it until one or other nation is ruined.' In an address to the Legislative Assembly, he

taunted England with being unable to wage a contest alone with France. In a general reception of the diplomatic corps, he exclaimed twice to our ambassador, 'You wish for war? You wish for war?'

With such provocations from France, with a proud and bellicose temper in England, a rupture became inevitable.

The War Renewed, 1803.

Preparations were hurriedly made on both sides, and, in May 1803, hostilities commenced with a declaration of war by the British Cabinet. The first step taken by Napoleon was to plan a gigantic invasion of England. 'We are going,' wrote the First Consul, 'to avenge six centuries of insults and shame; England is ours . . . let us be masters of the Channel for six hours, and we are masters of the world.'

But after waiting over two years, it was found impossible to cross the Straits of Dover. Disappointed in the hope of immediate success against England, and stung to the quick by the European coalition which now threatened him in the rear, Napoleon swung round his forces to execute vengeance on the continental powers.

Everything was in his favour. He was as uncontrolled at home as any of the Bourbons had been. He was absolute master of a rejuvenated nation that had always been celebrated for military prowess, but was now doubly anxious to excel. He had already brought the talisman of victory to the army, and the army and he were unequalled in the world. He had been proclaimed Emperor of the French, and his imagination was busy with the still greater title of Emperor of the West. He hoped to restore, perhaps to increase, the dominions of Charlemagne. In one respect indeed he had already surpassed the great monarch of the Middle Ages: for whereas Charlemagne had gone to Rome to be crowned by the Pope, the Pope came to Paris to crown Napoleon.

On the other hand, the enemies of France were faced by all the difficulties inseparable from a coalition. Divided counsels,

divided commands, and petty jealousies were visible everywhere. Their military reputation was not unsullied. The Austrians had already been defeated. The Prussian army had declined from the days of the great Frederick. The undisciplined Russians were in no condition to resist the flower of the Gallic troops. Sweden was isolated; the monarchy there had sunk far from its greatness of the seventeenth century, and Napoleon had himself taunted its ambassador with representing a third-rate State. Italy, Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland were absolutely under the control of France.

The French Conquest of Europe, 1803-12.

All went well for Napoleon. The victory of Austerlitz shattered the alliance of Russia and Austria. A year later, Prussia was overthrown at Jena. At Freidland, Russia was forced to sue for peace. A great battle at Wagram opened Vienna to the Grand Army of France. Berlin was entered in triumph, and the king of Prussia became an exile at Koenigsberg. Spain was invaded, and a relative of Buonaparte was set up as monarch at Madrid.

The whole continent was now humbled beneath Napoleon. But success only inspired the Emperor to vaster projects. He saw himself a greater dictator than Cæsar or Alexander had been. He was to be the autocrat who hushed the strife of warring nations into uniform peace. He was to be the human god that crushed the petty kings whose day was past. The continent at last united into the single imperial system he was planning, his hands would be free to turn against the arch-enemy, England. The French troops once in London, he would be master of land and sea. The British colonies and India would fall into his grasp; and Napoleon would be in fact, as he was already in contemplation, the ruler of the world.

The arrogance of the conqueror, an arrogance caused and justified by his own overpowering greatness, by his stupendous success, and by the comparative pettiness of his foes,

whose ancient kingdoms crumbled like paper at the first touch of his hand, appears often in his despatches, and in the epigrammatic sentences he threw out in camp. After Jena, for instance, 'All this has been child's play. . . . Enough of this; I am now going to treat my enemies so that I shall finish with them all.' When he saw the corruption of Turkey, 'We must have done with an empire that can last no longer; we must hinder its fragments from contributing to augment the dominion of England.' When the danger of invading Spain was pointed out, 'I shall find in Spain the Pillars of Hercules; I shall not find there the limits of my power.' And when his ministers remonstrated after the battle of Wagram, 'There can only be serious events in the theatre where I am operating, and there I am present to dominate all.'

After what manner the conqueror would have used his power we can only speculate. In some respects he was as great a civil administrator as a soldier; his work as First Consul of France showed him possessed of a genius for practical reforms, and his gift for organisation was superb.

But the day of universal empire, as of pure militarism, had gone by in Europe, if indeed it ever existed. There was no foundation for the conquests of Napoleon; he had no political principles to guide him after a victory had been won. He seized any alliance that presented itself, even on the field of battle with a conquered foe. He made treaties successively with Austria, Prussia, and Russia; within a few months all were broken. The very members of his own family that he raised to vacant thrones neglected his interests. If he made war with his genius, says the great French historian of the times, he made politics with his passions; and the remark is the key to the weakness of his empire.

As a statesman, the name of Napoleon was great before the rupture of the Peace of Amiens; but from that time not one of his creations endured. The kingdoms that he over-

turned were soon restored and continue intact to this day; his two finest projects, the restoration of Poland and the establishment of a republic in Italy, both died with him.

The disastrous retreat of the Emperor and the Grand Army of France from Moscow in 1812 was the beginning of the end. All Europe rose against the oppressor; and although Napoleon maintained a splendid struggle of despair, France was invaded by the allies. The indignities that had been cast on Vienna and Berlin were avenged when the foreign armies entered Paris. The Emperor consented to abdicate, for his position was now hopeless, and France herself turned against the man whom she had lately adored. The country resounded with curses on the 'Ogre of Corsica'; there were cries of 'A bas le tyran! A mort le tyran!' And men who but a few months before had not dared a whisper against Napoleon now criticised his government, his ambition, even his military capacity. His statue in Paris was taken down. In one place, he was obliged to change into foreign uniform to protect himself from the mob.

The Fall of Napoleon, 1814.

At length he arrived at Elba, the one spot of all his conquered realms that now remained to him. 'A new Sancho, I shall think only of the happiness of my island,' he laughed sarcastically; and there, separated from wife and child, from generals and army, from empire and provinces, and the pomp and panoply of power, he was to remain a space,—until the lust of dominion drew him forth to play one last desperate game with fate.

CHAPTER III

ENGLAND TRIUMPHANT AT SEA: 1793-1815

If Napoleon won victory after victory on land, he could not gain success for France at sea. The fleet of Britain still dominated the ocean; and instead of a monument at Paris

commemorating the last and greatest triumph of the Emperor, we find to-day only a column which calls to mind the fact that the army at Boulogne menaced England, and did no more. The medal that Napoleon caused to be prepared in advance, inscribed 'struck at London,' to signalise his entry into the enemy's capital, now appeals only to the curiosity of the antiquary. The British Navy alone stood between the British Empire and destruction; but it was equal to the task.

The Navy and the Nation.

It was, indeed, by no accident that the navy was efficient. However blind the nation had been to its opportunities in the colonies, it never failed to appreciate the importance of sea-power. The victory over the Armada entered deep into the heart of the people; it was recognised with thankfulness as a divine providence, but none the less was it recognised how manifestly the tactics of Howard and Drake had seconded the will of heaven. The lesson that the safety of the country centred in the fleet was never forgotten. It was enforced again and again by the most different writers and the most varying schools of thought.

Bacon found that 'he that commands the sea is at great liberty, and may take as much and as little of the war as he will, whereas those that be strongest by land are many times nevertheless in great straits.' Waller sang that his countrymen were 'lords of the world's great waste, the ocean,' and again that 'others may use the ocean as their road, only the English make it their abode.' When he celebrated the wars of the Commonwealth, he cried, 'Men that fight so, deserve to rule the sea.' Pepys heard 'with great pleasure of the superiority of the English fleet of his time, over that of the previous century. To Dryden the fleet was 'mistress of the seas,' the 'ancient lord' of the ocean; the proper care of the nation was 'new ships to build, and battered to repair.' Even Pope found that realms were 'commanded by our oaks.' And Thomson, in 1739, wrote the national anthem, the

proudest expression of sea-power, in which he exulted that 'Britannia rules the waves!'

The one subject on which men of every party were united was the necessity of a strong navy for England; and it would be difficult to say how great an effect this united attitude has had upon the foundation of the empire. The fleet on its side was worthy of the trust reposed in it, and the enthusiasm inspired by it. Seldom was it worsted by an enemy. The unconquerable breed of sailors by whom it was manned were perhaps no more courageous than the enemies with whom they fought; but the recklessness with which the British seamen entered the fight, the doggedness with which they pursued it, the thorough mastery of their ships and of naval tactics, in which they were unequalled, nearly always gave them the victory.

They were at home on the water; they loved their home and the country they served, and detested the foe and all his doings, with a childlike innocence curiously in contrast with their rugged strength of character and profound knowledge of their profession. 'Hate a Frenchman as you would the devil,' was Nelson's advice to those under him; they probably obeyed without difficulty. Even the unwilling conscripts caught the infection of duty.

The fleet had done worthy service during the earlier wars of the eighteenth century. And in the final great struggle against France, when Britain could do little at first on land but subsidise other nations, it was on the water that her great victories were won. At the outbreak of hostilities, the English fleet which was watching Toulon was driven away; but the next year the French were defeated by Howe off Brest. Three years later Jervis damaged the Spaniards in the battle of Cape St. Vincent, while the Dutch were almost annihilated at Camperdown. Nelson's victory of the Nile crushed the French schemes for the reduction of Egypt, and the capture of Malta deprived them of

Trafalgar, 1805.

their base. Meanwhile, the severe manner in which Britain had acted towards the vessels of non-combatant nations, insisting on the right of search and the confiscation of goods carried in neutral bottoms when destined for the enemy, had brought about a renewal of the coalition of 1780, the Armed Neutrality of the North. Russia, Sweden, Denmark, and Prussia banded themselves together, encouraged by Napoleon, to refuse British ships entry to their ports. The coalition hoped to close the continent to British trade, in revenge for the violation of neutral flags; and that measure, had it been successful, would almost have ruined England. But the Armed Neutrality was broken in the decisive battle of Copenhagen; and four years later, after unceasing watchfulness over Napoleon's camp at Boulogne, the crowning victory of Nelson at Trafalgar destroyed the French and Spanish fleets.

How deeply the news of this disaster to his arms disquieted Napoleon is shown by his wish to diminish its import. He ordered the newspapers to speak of it as a calamity caused rather by the tempest than by the British; but he thought no more of invading England till the whole continent should lie at his feet.

The invasion and occupation of England by the Grand Army were now no longer possible; the victory of Nelson at Trafalgar meant, indeed, although the fact was not fully realised at the time, that for the remainder of the war the command of the sea by Britain was to be undisputed, and that the only danger to her coasts was that a sudden raid or descent of the enemy might damage some unprotected spot in the absence of the fleet.

It meant, too, that India was safe from aggression; that South Africa remained in British hands; that the infant settlement in Australia could no longer be menaced by a French descent on the Antipodes; that the West Indian islands were secure. And it meant that the little outposts

of empire, those small red spots that dot the maps of the two hemispheres, and preserve the ocean road of Britain to the remotest of her possessions, were henceforth safe from molestation.

And in time it was discovered that the last victory of Nelson meant more even than this ; for the destruction of the French and Spanish fleets in Trafalgar Bay gave Britain the undisputed supremacy of the outer world during the whole of the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER IV

THE OCEAN HIGHWAY OF BRITAIN

The great wars raged in all the earth ; and the struggle for empire, which began with the attack of England and Holland on the Latin monopoly of the newly-discovered outer world in the sixteenth century, drew to a close when the two great Latin powers of France and Spain were defeated at Trafalgar. America and Africa had been involved in these strifes and rivalries of Europe, but the most bitter contest was that for the possession of India ; and as the influence of one European nation after another rose and fell in the Orient, the importance of the great ocean highway to the East, whose whole length every vessel must make ere it drops anchor before Calicut or Malabar, forced attention to the isles and islets with which that highway is strewn from the Azores to Ceylon. Some were scarce more than rocks, hardly large enough to supply a base from which pirates could raid an honest trader ; others, such as Mauritius, extensive, fertile, and beautiful, were worth possessing for their own wealth and charm ; and one, Madagascar, was almost an empire in itself.

The conflict grew and widened, and then narrowed again, as the dominance of Southern Asia passed definitely into

British hands; but the surging tides of conquest are recorded indelibly in the maps and annals of the Indian Ocean. Arab and Malay names mingle curiously with those commemorating Portuguese explorers, Dutch merchant captains, French adventurers, and English traders. A small archipelago recalls Vasco de Gama, the first great Latin traveller to cross those waters; Mauritius claims its name from the Dutch statesman, Maurice of Nassau; the Seychelles are called after a captain in the French East India service, and almost every island in that group is named from an eighteenth-century Frenchman. The Keeling Islands preserve the memory of an English navigator, and many another coral island or isolated rock owes its title on the chart to the fancy or the humour of our old seamen.

The older or South African road to India has been displaced, but not abandoned, in favour of the Suez Canal; and along both routes Britain has come to possess the chief strategic points, to guard that vast highway the length of which her ships, the spermatozoa of empire, beat daily to and fro in active, restless search for the most distant of our far dependencies in the utmost waters of the earth. The gates of the world are in the hands of the mighty from age to age; the nation that holds the solitary rocks and islands of mid-ocean holds sway also in remote continents and among strange peoples.

The Failure in Madagascar.

But the keys of the Indian Ocean only passed from France to Britain when the sea-power of Britain towered above that of all other countries in the Napoleonic wars; and the largest and most valuable of all the islands commanding those tropical waters fell definitely and finally to France after a struggle lasting over two centuries. The French won Madagascar by their pertinacity; the British lost it for lack of any definite aim.[1]

[1] Authorities.—For Madagascar, Lyons M'Leod's *Madagascar*; Ellis's *Visits to Madagascar*, which must be used with caution, since he was a

That great East African island, of whose existence mediæval and even ancient Europe had perhaps heard some vague uncertain rumours, was discovered by the Portuguese navigator, Fernan Suarez, in 1506. At first nothing more was known of Madagascar than that 'the inhabitants were very numerous, of simple manners, and had not up to that time heard of the religion of Christ'; and the Portuguese did little more than establish a temporary station on the coast, and send an expedition into the interior to search for silver.

For nearly a century afterwards Madagascar was abandoned by Europe, until French and English travellers appeared almost simultaneously on the island. The French East India Company sent a vessel thither in 1642; two years later an English settlement seems to have been established at St. Augustine's Bay.[1] But civil strife at home often checks expansion overseas; the place was neglected during the struggle between king and parliament in England, and Madagascar was soon abandoned by the British. The French stayed on; and from that time they never entirely gave up the hope of conquering the island.

But they had many vicissitudes to face; and internal quarrels, that recurrent plague of French colonies, broke out here as in India and Canada. The Governor of Fort Dauphin, as the Gallic station was named, was a Huguenot, his associates were Catholics; and religious passions ran high. The

participator in the events he narrates, and had good reason for not always revealing all his own acts; Keller's *Madagascar* is by far the best work on the subject, if not always full enough in detail. Mauritius may be studied in Grant's *History*; in an interesting, but not always accurate, series of articles in *Fraser's Magazine*, 1879; in J. F. Anderson's *Histoire de Protestantisme à l'Ile Maurice*, Paris, 1903, invaluable for its special subject. Stirling's *Cursory Notes on the Isle of France* are of little value; useful sidelights are thrown by Boyle's *Far Away*, and Bishop Vincent Ryan's *Journals*. The latter deals also with the Seychelles and other oceanic islands.

[1] There was at one time an idea that Prince Rupert should engage in the conquest of Madagascar; a poem on the subject was dedicated to him and published in 1638. But that impetuous leader found other employment in the outbreak of the Civil War in England shortly afterwards.

Governor, who had married a native of Madagascar, was charged with squandering the general funds of the station for the amusement of his lady; and whether true or not, the accusation served its purpose. The unlucky ruler was overpowered and imprisoned by his subordinates.

In the end he regained his authority, and expelled his captors, who migrated with some Malagasy women to the island of Bourbon; from which place the children of these hardy exiles spread to Mauritius, the Seychelles, and the Amirantes, establishing new French colonies of dubious character wherever they went. Freebooting became their profitable trade, and for long piracy was as rife in East Indian as in West Indian seas.

But meantime other troubles had overtaken the French in Madagascar. Some of the natives had been sold as slaves to the Dutch; and for this act, which savoured of treachery, the French paid dear. The aborigines lost faith in Europeans, and thenceforward there was continual war on the island. Three times was Fort Dauphin reduced to ashes; in 1672 the place was abandoned.

Another century passed; but although the eastern seas were filled with the strife of French and English, neither disturbed the repose of Madagascar. Not until 1774 were the old French claims revived, when a settlement was established at Antongil Bay by the Hungarian adventurer Benyowski. This extraordinary man[1] gained the complete confidence of the Malagasies, who elected him their king; he constructed roads, canals, and forts in the island; but his success proved more dangerous than failure might have been. The Governor of the neighbouring French colony of

[1] Benyowski had fought for the Poles against Russia, had been taken prisoner and sent to Kamchatka. His life there was a romance; the Governor's daughter loved him, he accepted and perhaps returned her devotion. At any rate, she helped him to escape; and after a series of exploits, which certainly lose nothing in his narration, he reached Madagascar.

Mauritius was envious, and intrigued against him; and Benyowski, tired of Gallic inconsistency, offered the island to other powers, among them being Austria and Britain. Neither accepted; and thus Britain lost her second opportunity in Madagascar. Benyowski was murdered in 1786 by the French; and for some years forward that nation only maintained a few stations on the eastern coast of the island, all of which were captured in 1811 by the British.

Both Mauritius and Bourbon had already fallen to England; and since British influence was now paramount in the Indian Ocean, it seemed probable that Madagascar would likewise fall into our hands. Nor was the desire to subdue the place lacking. Governor Farquhar of Mauritius claimed the larger island under the terms of the Treaty of Paris; and when the claim, as absurd as it was impudent, was repudiated by the French and withdrawn by the British, he took the better method of opening amicable relations with the Malagasy tribes themselves.

In 1817 the British agent in Antananarivo took the oath of blood with the king of the Hovas. In all things the two were to be as brothers; the slave trade was abolished in the same year, the British paying £2000 annually as compensation to the native monarch;[1] and the British Government undertook the education of twenty Hova youths, ten in London and ten in Mauritius. British missionaries now began the great work of converting the Malagasies to Christianity: the Gospel was preached, the Bible was translated; the people were taught to read and write, to engage in regular industry, and to follow commercial pursuits. The Hova army was reorganised and trained by British officers; in 1825 Fort Dauphin was captured, and French power in Madagascar seemed finally at an end.

[1] The Acting-Governor of Mauritius, in Farquhar's absence, repudiated the agreement, to the disgust of the Hovas. The difficulty was soon removed on Farquhar's return; but for some time the expression 'False as the English' was proverbial in Madagascar.

But British influence was as yet purely superficial. The death of King Radama in 1828 brought a violent reaction against foreign ideas, and under his successor, Queen Ranavalona, the missionaries and traders were expelled. The spread of Christianity was ascribed to sorcery, and Ranavalona declared that she would put an end to that creed if it cost the life of every convert in Madagascar. A reign of terror set in, and some of the Malagasies admitted that their profession of Christianity was due to political or personal rather than religious motives. 'We were doing work for government service under the white people,' said one reluctant or fearful convert, 'and they would not have liked us if we had not gone' to hear the missionaries; others among the young men suggested that 'to look for pretty women was our end in going; for there were assembled the cleanly and handsome.' And there is no reason to doubt that the native beauties willingly adopted that portion of the religious creed of England which makes the church a convenient centre for the exhibition of millinery at the stated times of public worship.

In 1861, however, the pagan queen died, and the British quickly regained their influence. Two years later a revolution took place, in which the rebels demanded that the Hova king should break with the French, who had been favoured by Ranavalona; and when he refused he was strangled. In this affair English intrigues played a not very creditable part; but the British profited by the crime. Trade with Madagascar increased, and the Hova kingdom was soon described as practically a colony of the London Missionary Society. The French again lost ground year after year, and the last vestige of their influence seemed to have departed now that their settlements were reduced to a few insignificant places on the coast.

But the British did not take advantage of the discomfiture of their rivals. The Imperial Government of the day had no

desire to enlarge its oversea possessions. There was no popular demand for the conquest of Madagascar. The British settlers in the island, too, seemed satisfied with the position as it stood, apparently not realising that if they did not annex Madagascar, another European nation would do so. And as France gradually recovered from her defeat by Germany in 1871, she revived her old claims; from the year 1883 her influence on the island grew steadily; and the studied policy of the British, who had elevated the Hovas from the position of the leading tribe into that of rulers of Madagascar, now aided the French, for it was easier to crush one centralised enemy than many small foes. The island was proclaimed a French protectorate: Antananarivo was taken in 1895; two years later Madagascar was declared a French colony, and, on 27th February 1897, the native queen was deposed.[1]

The chief prize of the Indian seas was thus lost to Britain; and the French intention of converting Diego Suarez, a haven in the north of Madagascar, into a naval stronghold, caused some little uneasiness in England. But of the smaller and less valuable islands in these waters, many already acknowledged the Union Jack; and the highway of empire had been strengthened by the acquisition of such places as Mauritius, the Seychelles, and the coral archipelagoes which lie scattered between Africa and Asia.

The three islands of Mauritius, Bourbon or Réunion, and Rodriguez, often called collectively the Mascarenes, from the Portuguese traveller, Pedro de Mascarenhas, who discovered them in 1513, were the chief centres of French power in the Eastern seas throughout the whole of the eighteenth century. **Mauritius, 1810.**

Mauritius had been occupied by the Dutch in 1598, on their first engaging in the Indian trade; but when their power

[1] Considerable jealousy was shown in England at the time. The French conquest was a brilliant piece of work; but in 1895 *Punch* published an unworthy cartoon, representing a French soldier dying, and rejoicing in his last moments that his death would annoy the English.

began to decline, they abandoned the island in 1715, having founded the town of Grand Port, now known as Mahébourg. A few Dutch names still linger in the island as relics of the past; but Mauritius was occupied almost at once by the French, and for nearly a century the Ile de France, as it was called affectionately by the settlers, was an object of peculiar care.

There was no lack of colonists for a land so fertile; and, more fortunate than the ill-fated colony of Louisiana in America, which was founded about the same time, both the planters and their wives were of good character. Orphan girls were sent out from Paris to Mauritius; and in a healthy climate, with an easy, happy life, the fecundity of the race was found to increase,[1] while the beauty both of the women and of their children was admitted by all. Many fortunes were made by sugar cultivation;[2] there was no lack of labour from the neighbouring African tribes; and under the wise rule of Labourdonnais and others, the place prospered greatly. The city of Port Louis was founded in 1735 by Labourdonnais, who introduced cotton and indigo, built hospitals, and constructed an aqueduct; while in 1768 the celebrated Botanical Gardens at Pamplemousses—the scene of the pathetic tragedy of *Paul et Virginie*—were established.

Bourbon and Rodriguez were hardly less happy than Mauritius. Unlike the French colonies in the West Indies, all three weathered the French Revolution without mishap; but during the Napoleonic wars, and as a consequence of the predominance of British sea-power throughout the world, they were lost to their motherland. On 6th July 1810, twenty British vessels appeared off Bourbon, and

[1] It will be remembered that in less propitious circumstances the fecundity of the French declined in Quebec at this period. See vol. i. book iv. chap. iv.

[2] If a French planter were so unfortunate as to fail, he generally emigrated to Madagascar, where he cast about for a Malagasy woman with property, married her, and settled down as well as he might on the proceeds.

four days later the island capitulated before an overwhelming force of five thousand men. A few months later, on 6th December, Mauritius was likewise captured; and Rodriguez fell with its larger fellows. Bourbon was restored to France in 1815, and renamed Réunion in memory of the event; but Mauritius and Rodriguez remain British possessions to this day.

Mauritius, however, was not altogether fortunate in its new masters. The island had been much to France; it was little to Britain. And its prosperity gradually declined, as several causes united to lessen its former wealth and importance. The abolition of slavery in 1835 checked the sugar plantations, and the emancipated negroes became the owners of small holdings in preference to working on the plantations; and though Indian kulis were introduced and found satisfactory,[1] the closely cultivated soil presently began to suffer from exhaustion, and the plants from parasites. The competition of the sugar-beet now injured the growers of the sugar-cane;[2] while the opening of the Suez Canal and the introduction of the steamboat diverted much profitable shipping which had hitherto used the island as a port of call. Mauritius could no longer be justly called the Star and Key of the Indian Seas, as its Latin motto implied, when the main bulk of shipping passed it by.

Sanitation was neglected, and the island, formerly noted for its salubrity, became a centre of disease. Port Louis in particular was dirty,[3] and subject to malaria; cholera broke out from time to time and slew thousands. On such occa-

[1] By 1863 two-thirds of the population were Indian kulis.

[2] The striking analogy between the history of Mauritius and the West Indies is obviously due to similarities of climate, soil, products, and population. The Suez Canal, however, harmed Mauritius by displacing it from its position on a main trade route; the Panama Canal will give the West Indies the advantage.

[3] 'Only one-fourth of the excreta of the 78,000 inhabitants of Port Louis is removed; the remainder is left to be absorbed by the earth, or is carried into the open drains and ditches of the town.'—Extract from an Official Report.

sions the timid took to religion and the careless took to drink; but the real cause of the evil was for long not attended to.

The French population remained true at heart to the country of its origin; French customs have been preserved to this day; a French patois is still spoken,[1] and French laws mix incongruously with English in the administration of justice. The descendants of the older settlers, the aristocracy of the place, likewise remained true to the Roman form of Christianity, which their ancestors had professed in France; but protestant missionaries from England were quickly in the field. Mauritius was made an episcopal see of the Church of England, with ecclesiastical authority over the other British possessions in the Indian Ocean; and Vincent Ryan, the first bishop, preached strenuously and with some apparent success to the kuli immigrants from India and Africa. His converts were many; even his cathedral was a converted powder-magazine.

But despite the good bishop's toil, the field was too great and too uncultivated for any real impression to be made for many years. A traveller discovered a Christian Hindu who still sacrificed to Vishnu, excusing himself with the remark that 'the Blessed Virgin is good, but Vishnu is good too; if I could please the Virgin and Vishnu too, I should have a double chance of getting through safely.' And the African converts believed that the new religion was rather a talisman against the evils of this world than a passport to the glories of another. In their view, Christianity was desirable because, when 'cholera come to Indian boy, he no die; come to African, he die. Indian boy baptized, African no baptized.' It was a fact that the Africans had not been

[1] The greater part of Mauritian literature is printed in French; but in the present century a change in favour of English has become noticeable.

baptized, since it was doubted whether they understood the meaning of the new doctrines; it was a coincidence favourable to superstition that they died more rapidly of the cholera than the Asiatics.

The creeds of the world might dispute their efficacy in Mauritius; but whatever ground the island afforded for the efforts of the religious, its material prosperity continued to decline from year to year. At the beginning of the twentieth century a melancholy picture might have been drawn of a once flourishing colony steadily sinking deeper into the mire of poverty; pauperism had increased until it became a serious economic problem, the taxation for the relief of distress was so heavy that it aggravated the evil it was intended to abate; unemployment and disease were constant factors in Mauritius, and the conclusion became inevitable that it was overpopulated.[1] The total number of its inhabitants in 1908 was 376,635, and there was some tendency to desert an island which had apparently seen its best days.

Poor as it is, Mauritius has its share of authority. The island of Rodriguez is administered by a magistrate under the control of the Mauritian Government; and the Chagos Islands, an extensive archipelago of coral formation, are likewise ruled from Port Louis. The largest of this latter group of one hundred and fifty islands is Diego Garcia, which has a good harbour. It was used as a refuge for lepers in the eighteenth century, when it was under the control of France; a hundred years later, a temporary coaling-station was established there, and it became a port of call for Australian steamers.

Dependencies of Mauritius.

The total population of the Chagos Islands is rather over a thousand, of which Diego Garcia contains about half: the Galagas and Cargados group, which are known as 'oil islands,' from their produce of cocoanut oil, are not regularly inhabited.

[1] See particularly the Official Report on Mauritius for 1908.

More fortunate of recent years than Mauritius, the Seychelles archipelago, a series of some eighty granitic islands and islets, were originally discovered but not peopled by the Portuguese. They were annexed in 1742 by France; and the first Gallic colony was founded in 1768 at Mahé, the largest of the group, which took its name from Mahé Labourdonnais, the great benefactor of Mauritius, and in some ways the greatest man who has ruled in the Indian Ocean. From time to time other French planters followed the example of the pioneer settlers from the Mascarenes; but the Seychelles were seized by a Captain Newcome for the British on 17th May 1794. So little difference did the change of allegiance make in the circumstances of the colony, however, that the last French Governor retained his position for some years as British agent; and indeed the strife of rival European nationalities was hardly noticed in these remote islands. French manners and customs persisted under British rule in the Seychelles, as they had done in Mauritius, from which dependency those islands were administered until 1888.

Seychelles and Dependencies, 1794.

Prosperity declined for a time when slavery was abolished in 1834; but of late years there has been a considerable revival; coffee, sugar, and spices still being grown, and both rubber and vanilla yielding valuable crops. The inhabitants, who are more French than English, are both healthy and prolific; the death-rate in 1906 was but 16.48, and the birth-rate 31.01 per thousand.

The Amirantes, the home of the gigantic land-tortoise, are a group of some one hundred and fifty islets and rocks to the east of the Seychelles. Discovered in 1502 by the Portuguese, they are named after the great Admiral Vasco de Gama; their geographical position necessarily links them politically with the Seychelles.

The island of Aldabra, which with Cosmoledo, Assumption, and Astove, lies between the Seychelles and Comoro, is

under the administration of the Seychelles. Its annals may be expressed in the terms of the yearly catch of turtles and fish,—a form of history which can be left without regret to local talent.

Other dependencies of the Seychelles are the Alphonse, Bijoutier, St. François, and St. Pierre islands. They are little more than oceanic rocks; and as their names imply, they originally belonged to France. It is a matter of the smallest importance to what nation they adhere; they have no settled population.

The Providence and Farquhar rocks may also be included in this list. The latter is called after the energetic British Governor of Mauritius; the former probably owes its name to a sailor who escaped shipwreck there. Both are rather dangers to navigation than advantages to empire.

All these islands possessed a certain importance in the eighteenth century; all were on or near the great highway to India, and all derived some advantages from their geographical position. Each was in some sort a tavern of the eastern seas, where honest traders or pirates refreshed themselves during the toils of a long voyage; and each prospered better in the days of sailing ships and leisured travel than when quick steamers rendered intermediate ports of call useless.

The Mediterranean Highway.

But there was another reason for the diminishing value of these small tropical islands of the eastern tropics. The construction of the Suez Canal in the year 1869 by the French engineer, De Lesseps, if it did not reduce or change the predominance of British power in the East, at least worked a profound alteration in the relative value of the line of communications by which that power was guarded.[1] The centre of gravity shifted; and the main ocean highway of empire,

[1] The work was begun in 1860, after several years spent in surveying and planning. The first steamer passed through on 28th September 1869, with De Lesseps on board.

instead of stretching as before from Plymouth to the Cape of Good Hope and from the Cape onwards towards India, now ran through the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and along the southern shores of Asia.

The canal was at first indeed strongly opposed by the British, partly because it was a French scheme, and one that originated in modern times with Napoleon; but mainly because it was feared that it would damage the supremacy of England as the distributing centre of Indian goods in Europe. Yet even before the canal was constructed, England was making more use of the Suez route to the East every year. In 1837 the overland oriental mail route through Egypt was instituted; twenty years later a railway was constructed from Cairo through the desert, and steamers transhipped their passengers at Suez. After a while the canal proved more advantageous to Britain, as the leading maritime power of the world, than to any other country, for it shortened the passage to India from 11,379 to 7,268 miles, and in time brought Bombay within a fortnight's distance of London. And finally the far-seeing Disraeli took advantage of the practical bankruptcy of the Egyptian Khedive to purchase in 1875 for the British Government 176,602 shares in the Suez Canal Corporation for £3,976,582. The purchase was criticised by political opponents at home; but it was triumphantly justified by time. It gave the leading control of the canal to the British, and proved an investment of continually increasing value.

The Mediterranean Sea was no longer an inland lake when the Suez Canal connected it with an arm of the Indian Ocean; it became the second stage on the new oriental highway. And by good fortune rather than through any prevision of the future, England had already acquired certain stations in the Mediterranean at various times, some of which had indeed proved useless and were lost or abandoned after a few years; but others were permanently valuable in the highest degree.

The history of British policy in the Mediterranean furnishes some curious instances of vacillation and mistaken judgment; it affords others of absolute and admitted failure. But in any critical examination of that policy it must be remembered that the objects of our statesmen in those closed waters have varied from century to century, as the importance of the Mediterranean has itself varied from time to time in high politics or in commerce. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the sole object of the British in the Mediterranean was trade; their one unfortunate acquisition was held with the idea that it might prove of commercial value. That idea was erroneous, and Tangier was given up after a few years; and the acquisitions of the next century, in Minorca, Gibraltar, and Corsica were made for strategic and diplomatic rather than mercantile purposes. The large British trade with the Levant was carried on independently of these possessions; the subsequent occupation of Malta was similarly due to politics and not to trade. In the middle of the nineteenth century, however, the political importance of the Mediterranean was enormously increased by the construction of the Suez Canal: Gibraltar and Malta became of vastly greater value than they had ever been before; and when Britain, in addition to holding those places, occupied Cyprus in 1878, and supported her presence by a large naval fleet and a garrison, she obtained a strong if not an unchallenged position in the waters which divide Europe from Africa.

Our first possession in those parts was purely commercial. English traders had built up a considerable traffic under Elizabeth and her successors with the ports of the Mediterranean; but the earliest territorial acquisition of Britain brought nothing save disappointment and loss. On the marriage of Charles II. to Catherine of Braganza, the city of Tangier was ceded to England by Portugal as part of her marriage dowry; and high hopes were entertained that it would be of use in extending the

Tangier, 1662-84.

Morocco trade, and perhaps eventually form the nucleus of a large territorial settlement.

The illusion was quickly dispelled. When the English garrison arrived on 29th January 1662, it found Tangier ' very little better than a ruin of walls ' ;[1] and it was discovered that in evacuating the place the Portuguese had carried off everything they could, even to ' the very floors, the windows, and the doors.' And almost immediately after its occupation Tangier was besieged by the Moors, whose assaults were continual.

The place proved a very uncomfortable heritage. It is true that one of the Governors of Tangier was sanguine enough to expect that by ' the indefatigable pains and labour of our sojers and the extraordinary diligence of our officers ' we should ' put a pair of spectacles on (the Moorish chief) Gayland's nose it would trouble him so as to oblige him at last to a peace.' But the British were badly worsted by the Moors in 1664, and other sieges followed in quick succession. The Dutch, too, blockaded Tangier by sea, and the expense of maintaining the garrison was heavy.

A great mole was built to form a harbour, at the enormous outlay for that time of £265,108, 14s. 8½d., according to the official account; and many fortifications were necessary to protect Tangier by land. Had the place proved of any commercial value, it might have been worth keeping. But although it was proclaimed a free port, it was too insecurely held for trade to be carried on ; there were ' nothing but Moors and the four elements to be seen,' instead of merchants and cargoes, and in the opinion of the outspoken Pepys, the only use of Tangier was ' as a job to do a kindness to some lord.'

Parliament now grew suspicious, fearing that the unfortunate settlement was being used as a nursery ' for papists '

[1] Although in that very year a too optimistic official, one John Creed, wrote to Pepys, 'Blessed be God, the affaire of Tangier is in the best posture you can expect.'—*Hist. MSS. Comm., Hodgkin MSS.*, 1897.

and 'desperate popish officers.' There was probably no truth in this conjecture, which would hardly have been made had not the anti-papal agitation of Titus Oates driven England to frenzy at this time. But it was soon decided to abandon a useless and costly possession. On 13th October 1683 the proclamation of withdrawal was read to the garrison in Tangier, and orders were given for the great mole and the fortifications to be demolished. By March 1684 the place was deserted.

This first possession of Britain on the north-west coast of Africa was likewise the last. For the next twenty years we remained without any foothold on the Mediterranean; but our fleets were constantly employed in those waters, and the necessity of establishing a port of call soon became evident. But of the two places that were occupied for this reason, the splendour of the one was not realised; the conquest of the other was not permanent.

Gibraltar fell to Britain in 1704; Minorca in 1708. The importance of the latter was well understood in the War of the Spanish Succession; and the British Cabinet instructed General Stanhope to attempt its capture. 'I still insist,' wrote the Lord Treasurer, 'that we cannot winter a squadron in the Mediterranean without having Port Mahon or Toulon.' Marlborough's opinion as the first soldier of the age was of more weight; and he also held the same language in private letters. The British force landed on 14th September 1708, and a fortnight later Minorca surrendered. Stanhope reported his success to London, giving it as his 'humble opinion that England ought never to part with this island: which will give the law to the Mediterranean both in time of war and peace. . . . I cannot but hope that we shall think of preserving Port Mahon, and indeed the whole of the island.' After some months of negotiation with the Austrian Court his wish was realised; it was secured under certain conditions, and at the Treaty of Utrecht ceded absolutely.

Minorca, 1708-82.

During the next forty years of peace, Minorca remained quietly in British possession, a thorn in the side of France and Spain. As a purely military station, its history offers nothing of interest. Its importance seems to have been exaggerated by the statesmen of the age, as that of Gibraltar was depreciated; but under Walpole and his successors the garrison was neglected, and the Governor apparently spent most of his time in England. In these circumstances, when the Seven Years' War broke out in 1756, the French anticipated and found an easy conquest. The deputy-governor was disabled by old age and infirmities, and had to issue most of his orders from a sick-bed; the chief engineer was in the same predicament; all the colonels were absent. The total garrison was 2800 men, but the fleet that was sent to assist in the defence was under the command of Admiral Byng. After an indecisive action, he returned to Gibraltar, and Minorca fell. The grief and rage at home were intense, but nothing could be done. However, at the Peace of Paris in 1763, it was exchanged for Belleisle.

Still it was an object of envy by France. When war again began, it was immediately attacked in 1781, and after a prolonged and gallant defence surrendered the next year. Thus was Port Mahon, 'the finest port in the Mediterranean,' finally lost; for at the Peace of Versailles it was not restored. Geographically and nationally it belonged to Spain: and we can see it now under the red and yellow flag without the least regret. The subsequent acquisition of Malta more than compensated for its loss.

With Gibraltar the case was different. The Pillars of Hercules, the old boundary of the world, fell in 1704 to the squadron with which Sir George Rooke had unsuccessfully attacked Barcelona. The Spaniards had left less than a hundred soldiers in the garrison, and had neglected to fortify it. Eighteen hundred men under the Prince of Darmstadt were landed on the sandy stretch

Gibraltar, 1704.

which connects Gibraltar with the mainland. They might have experienced considerable resistance; but the sentinels had gone to church instead of on duty. While they were praying for the destruction of the heretics, the heretics themselves scaled and stormed the Rock; and the too fervent piety of the Spaniards was only rewarded by a forced capitulation. Against the wishes of the Prince, Rooke hoisted the English flag, which, through the vicissitudes of more than two centuries, has never been hauled down.

Keenly as the French felt the loss of Calais, keenly as we should have felt the loss of Dover, Spain felt the loss of Gibraltar more keenly still. Part of the sacred land, whose proud boast was that it contained no unbeliever, was in the hands of the infidels. The same infidels, an upstart race from the north, had scattered the invincible Armada. The same infidels had attacked Spain east and west, north and south, at home and abroad, in port and on the high seas. . The insult was one to be wiped out by blood alone.

The fortress was attacked next year by land and water; but it had other defenders then, whose religious festivals did not disorganise defence; and after an ineffectual siege, the Rock was left to its conquerors. In 1727 another attempt was made. The Count of Las Torres bragged that in six weeks he would plant his flag there, and drive the heretics into the sea. But by now Gibraltar was well fortified: six warships were in attendance; it could not be blockaded, and fresh provisions arrived constantly from Tangier and Tetuan. After four months, the second siege was relinquished.

The third, final, and most important investment began in 1779. The blockade lasted for more than three years. The attack was conducted by the allied armies and fleets of France and Spain. At one time 33,000 men and 170 heavy pieces of artillery were in use against it. In one period of six weeks, over 56,000 shot and 20,000 shells were fired

upon it. Floating batteries were used in the bombardment. Princes of the royal house of France joined the besiegers.

The garrison were reduced to eat thistles, dandelions, and wild leeks. The Governor lived entirely on vegetables. Scurvy broke out. But still the defenders held out, at one time making a successful sortie, at another receiving relief from the English fleet, at another silencing a bombardment with a counter-demonstration. At length, in February 1783, the news of the Treaty of Versailles arrived, and the siege was perforce at an end.

From that day Gibraltar has never been menaced. By common consent it has been left to its masters, the key of the Mediterranean, the first gate on the British highway to the East. Were this a military history, an account of the fortifications that honeycomb the majestic pile, a description of the cannon that frown over the stormy Straits, would be in place. But except in a technical work, such details have no interest; and we may confine ourselves to noticing the varying political and military importance of Gibraltar.

The *Ne Plus Ultra* of Charles v., the Mountain and the Key as its own emblem declares, was at first better appreciated in Spain than in England. On the opposite side of the Straits were the Mohammedan powers that threatened the most Catholic country in Europe. Against these Gibraltar was a perpetual bulwark. To England, on the other hand, it had at the time no such value. Minorca was considered a jewel of the first water, Gibraltar an expensive dependency. In 1718 Stanhope thought of yielding it. 'Gibraltar is of no great importance,' he wrote; and again in 1720 he suggested that in the event of Spain offering an equivalent advantage the loss of the fortress would not be regrettable. Florida or the eastern part of Hispaniola were spoken of as exchanges. The whole question was referred by both sides to the Congress of Cambray in the same year.

Even Pitt in 1757 offered the Court of Madrid that if they would assist England to recover Minorca from France and take part in the war as allies, he would yield Gibraltar. Fortunately nothing came of these overtures.

But it must not be too hastily assumed that the English statesmen of that day were ill-advised in their efforts to get rid of the Rock. It was kept up at considerable expense at a time when expenditure was constantly increasing. The Mediterranean had declined in importance till it had become little more than a lake. England had no great interests there. Nobody could foresee that the main route to the East Indies a hundred years later would lie by way of Gibraltar and Suez. Even so, the Orient of the eighteenth century had not the same meaning for Britain that it has now. Robert Walpole was far from the days of Disraeli and declarations that England was an Asiatic power.

At the present time everything is different. Our interests in the East have grown until it is of the first importance to secure the line of communication. Those travellers who pass Gibraltar now on their way to Australia, or India and the Far East, recognise how vital to the empire is the one British possession on the European mainland; and how correct is the view which regards it as the first link in that great chain of imperial defence which is stretched the whole length of the ocean highway.

The second is Malta. Captured in 1800 without a thought of its ultimate use, it was taken from Napoleon by a combined army of Maltese, Neapolitans, and English. Held by Britain temporarily after the peace of 1802, it was to be given up as soon as a guarantee was forthcoming from France that Napoleon would not again seize it. Meanwhile war broke out, and at the general peace of 1815 it was ceded absolutely to England.

Malta, 1800.

Malta with its two dependent islands was not, and has not been, an easy place to govern. To us its chief, indeed

its only use, was as a fortress in the central Mediterranean. From that point of view it was of tremendous importance, which has increased since the cutting of the Suez Canal: but in a military establishment civilians are unnecessary, and there happened to be a large population already in Malta, with patriotic traditions and remembrances of its own. We started, indeed, with public opinion in our favour, after the usurpation by Napoleon had put an end to the historic order of knights associated with the island for centuries; a monument erected voluntarily by the Maltese attests the welcome they gave us.

But a mixed race is always difficult to rule; and the Maltese are mixed as are few other people in the world. Composed of Italians and Sicilians, with a strong addition of Arabic, a touch of the Greek, possibly a trace of the Egyptian and northern African nations, with a Spanish strain and perhaps a very slight French tinge, the Maltese are the outcome of the continual intermarriage of every race surrounding the Mediterranean. The British tendency in governing the place was naturally to emphasise the military element; and it was therefore not long before serious discontent appeared. A series of reforms carried out through a number of years alleviated the situation. The censorship of the press was abolished in 1836: the beginnings of representative government were granted in 1849, and it was agreed that the native laws should be administered by native judges.

Other measures followed; but within the last few years there has been more than one agitation. That these have been well founded seems to be indicated by the fact that the British Government has generally given way. Malta is now of considerable commercial importance, and its harbour of Valetta is not only the headquarters of the British navy in the Mediterranean, but likewise a port of call for trading ships.

The two neighbouring islands of Gozo and Comino are also British territory, under the same rule as Malta: that is to say, a crown colony, administered by the General in command of the garrison, assisted by an executive council and a council of government.

The almost forgotten British occupation of the Ionian Islands possesses a peculiar interest, in that it furnishes one of the exceedingly rare instances in which we have given up a place at the wish of the inhabitants without any other reason than the expression of that wish. Taken over as a protectorate in 1814, this group of islands was administered by England for exactly half a century. They were well governed, and their prosperity increased almost every year. But when we first occupied the Ionian Isles, Greece was still a province of Turkey; within a few years afterwards that country had recovered its historic freedom. The noble desire for national unity was fermenting in the popular mind; and the Ionian islanders naturally desired to share the fortunes of their mother country rather than continue under foreign rule. W. E. Gladstone went out as commissioner to investigate the situation, and as a result of his recommendations the islands were ceded freely to the kingdom of Greece in 1864. The decision excited some criticism, but there can be little doubt that it was justified in every way.

The Ionian Isles, 1814-64.

Two other islands in the Mediterranean were the occasion of British intervention or occupation during the long wars, An attempt was made to assuage the troubles of Sicily in 1812 by granting its people a constitution under the protection of England; but that inestimable boon was received with profound indifference, and both the constitution and the protection of England were withdrawn when experience showed that neither was appreciated. The Sicilians had indeed suffered many things under many rulers; but Britain was the wrong doctor to cure the chronic

Corsica, 1794. Sicily, 1812.

political maladies of that island, and the prescription which she administered proved the wrong remedy.

Our experience in Corsica was equally unfortunate. In the stormy eighteenth-century politics of that island, one party declared for England and another for France; and when the former faction gained the upper hand, George III. was acknowledged as king on 17th June 1794. The place was ruled for a time by the first Earl of Minto, who in later years became Governor-General of India; but the partisans of France made headway, and the ungrateful islanders, who were as remiss as the Sicilians in their appreciation of the blessings of the constitution which was given them, revolted and declared in favour of the Gallic Republic. The British shortly afterwards abandoned the island, and the Corsicans appear to have watched their departure with easy equanimity.

Of more significance than these petty episodes was the British occupation of Cyprus;[1] but that occupation, while not without interest in the annals of the ocean highway of Britain, was but an incident, a recent and relatively unimportant incident, in the long and varied history of the island. Originally a Greek colony, Cyprus has

Cyprus, 1878.

[1] For Cyprus, the *Yearly Handbook of Cyprus; Cyprus as I saw It in* 1879, by Sir S. Baker; Stewart, *My Experience of the Island of Cyprus*; Fyler's *Development of Cyprus*, a very useful work; and George Chacalli, *Cyprus Under British Rule* (printed at Nicosia), expressing the extreme Cypriot view.

For the other possessions, Captain Hunter's *Account of the British Settlement of Aden*, a standard work; for Perim, *The British Outpost of Perim*, in the Records of the Bombay Government, No. 149. There is an article on Socotra in the *Nineteenth Century*, June 1897, by Theodore Bent; see also the *Life and Letters of St. Francis Xavier*, by H. J. Coleridge, S.J., and a pamphlet by Phil Robinson, dated 1878. The smaller islands are mentioned in the Colonial Office List and the valuable yearly Official Reports. For the Maldives, see a paper by H. C. Bell, written for the Indian Government in 1881, and the *Voyage of Francis Pyrard*, published by the Hakluyt Society; for the Andaman Islands, Lieutenant C. H. Turner's *Notes on the Andaman Islands* (Rangun, 1897), and Colonel R. C. Temple on the Penal System, in the *Journal of the Society of Arts*, 24th February 1899. For the Keeling Islands, Keller's book on the *Islands of the Indian Ocean*, and Darwin's *Voyage of H.M.S. Beagle.*

passed from age to age to one nationality after another, its strategic position always rendering it valuable to the state that holds the command of the eastern Mediterranean. It was a province of the Roman and Byzantine Empires; it was held by Crusaders and Knights Templars as a vantage ground from which to conquer Jerusalem; by Venetians and Genoese as a base for trade; and finally it fell to the Turks when the Ottoman Empire was founded.

The first appearance of the English in Cyprus as a sovereign power was a matter of a few days only. In the year 1191 the island was seized by Richard I., as compensation for an injury to that impetuous prince; and there he married his consort Berengaria. But the crusades claimed him in Palestine; and, wearied of a possession that was both useless and embarrassing, he parted with Cyprus to the Templars.

After many vicissitudes and misfortunes, the island again passed to Britain in virtue of a convention with Turkey in 1878. It was to be occupied and administered by the British so long as Russia maintained her conquests in Armenia—conquests that are now apparently permanent. But Cyprus nominally remained a Turkish possession, and a yearly tribute was to be paid by the island to the Ottoman Empire.

On 12th July 1878, the British flag was hoisted on the ramparts of the capital city of Nicosia, amid manifestations of joy from the Greek population; and many hopes were formed, both by the British from their new territory, and by the Cypriots from their new masters. Something of the halo of romance, with which the poets of Greece had surrounded the island, still lingered before English eyes; the land of flowers, the chosen abode of the goddess of love, might yet prove an acquisition of good omen to the great modern empire of Britain.

But misfortunes dogged Cyprus almost from the first. The British control over Egypt soon rendered the island of small

importance. The yearly tribute of £81,752, which was payable to Turkey, was a heavy tax which Cyprus could not always meet. The British Treasury had often to come to its aid; and in twenty years more than half a million sterling was contributed from this source. And the uncertainty of the tenure by which the island was held made capitalists hesitate before embarking money on schemes for its development. It was rumoured that Cyprus was to be given back to Turkey; an agitation sprang up among the Cypriot Greeks for its cession to Greece, and some persons in England favoured the idea.[1] It was, indeed, emphatically stated by successive British Governments that there was no intention whatever of abandoning the island; but one of the many disadvantages of the fluctuating foreign policy of the time lay in the fact that a new administration was not bound by the declarations of its predecessors. The uncertainty continued, and the island languished.

Nevertheless, although Chamberlain admitted when Colonial Secretary that England had not done all she might for Cyprus,[2] many real improvements were in fact effected. The island suffered alternately from floods and droughts; and in 1897 it was decided to spend £60,000 on irrigation and reservoirs. Plagues of locusts infested the land, and often destroyed every scrap of vegetation and even human life,[3] and drastic steps were taken to stamp out the pest. A locust tax was imposed, and rewards were offered for the destruction of the insects; in 1881 over 1300 tons of eggs were destroyed, and two years later the almost incredible number

[1] A meeting was held at the St. James's Hall in London in 1897 in support of the cession of Cyprus to Greece.

[2] But in the parliamentary debate on 8th August 1898, he stated that 'he would not ask the House to be liberal to Cyprus if he thought it were not a good investment.' A few years later, however, the London *Globe* still spoke of Cyprus as a derelict dependency.

[3] A fifteenth-century priest was suffocated by the very locusts he was cursing. I leave it to the learned in such matters to determine whether the potency of the curses, or the orthodoxy of the locusts was at fault.

of 200,000 million live locusts were captured. In due course these measures proved effectual.

All the roads of the colony as well as the railways were of British construction. No printing press had existed in 1878; within thirty years one Turkish and ten Greek newspapers were published. The few schools were enlarged and improved; and at the beginning of the twentieth century there were 392 Christian and 160 Moslem primary schools in the island. And the old corrupt law courts were reformed, and some measure of self-government introduced. But many of the Greeks of the islands were and are discontented, even with the improved condition of the administration; and the British in like manner have been somewhat disappointed with their limited success.

If the growing British control over Egypt was a misfortune to Cyprus, our dominance of the north-east African coast strengthened the ocean highway of empire; and the southern entrance of the Red Sea was already secured by the possession of a second Gibraltar. The great Portuguese conqueror, Albuquerque, declared that four places were essential to the nation which held dominion in the Orient, —Aden, Ormuz, Diu, and Goa. The first of these—which the Portuguese themselves held but for four years, from 1547 to 1551—though situated at the far end of a vast desert peninsula, though arid and indeed almost rainless, had necessarily been an important centre of commerce since traffic first existed between Europe and Asia. To Aden came vessels from Suez, from the East African coast, from Persia, India, and, according to Hakluyt, even from China. Aden was known, at least by name, to the Greeks, perhaps also to the Jews; a vague but not impossible tradition declares that it was once occupied by the Romans. It was visited by Marco Polo; and it had been admired by the Bolognese traveller, Ludovico di Varthema, who declared it 'the strongest city that was ever seen on level ground.' But Aden lost its old

The Red Sea.

importance when Indo-European trade deserted it for the new South African route, and by the end of the eighteenth century the place was in a half-ruined condition.

But the English had already had dealings with the sultans who controlled Aden. One of the first voyages of the East India Company, in 1609, was to Aden; in 1618 a trading station was established at Mocha. But no political influence was secured, or even perhaps desired, in Arabia, until the year 1802 when, under Wellesley's energetic rule in India, a treaty was made with the Sultan of Aden. A coaling depot was projected there in 1827, but the idea was abandoned; eleven years later, however, when some shipwrecked British sailors were insulted and outraged by the Sultan, he was forced to sell his territory in compensation to the English. The wretched chief wished to retain his authority over his old subjects after the cession; but this was refused, and Aden was occupied by the British on 16th January 1839.

Aden, 1839.

The place was declared a free port in 1850, and its trade quickly revived, both on that account and by reason of the opening of the Suez Canal. The population, which had been but 6000 in 1839, rose steadily until in 1901 it was 43,974; and fresh territory became necessary to provide for the motley Adenese population of Arabs, Somalis, and Jews. In 1868, Little Aden, the western arm of the harbour, was purchased with the island of Sirah; fourteen years later an inland tract of country was bought, which gave water and salt pits to the place; and in 1888 a third extension was made. By this time the original small protectorate was enlarged to sixty-six square miles; and the old town, which had been confined to the crater of an extinct volcano, had become a coaling station, a garrison, and a fortress of first-rate importance.

British Somaliland, which lies on the African coast over against Aden, on the other side of the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, those sorrowful waters which the Arabs know as the Gate of

Tears, belongs to the history of the British in Africa rather than the annals of the ocean highway beside which it lies; but the dependencies of Perim, Socotra, and the petty Kuria Maria Islands all owe such importance as they may possess to their position on the direct road to the Orient.

The small isle of Perim, at the entrance of the Red Sea, is a bare dry rock some five miles square, on whose low hills grows a species of coarse grass which affords sustenance only to a few miserable goats. But strategically the place is important, and for that reason it was occupied by the British during a few months in 1799, while Napoleon was threatening India from Egypt. Abandoned shortly afterwards, it was again taken in 1857.

A lighthouse was erected, and in time Perim became a cable station and coaling depot. It now possesses a fortress, and is garrisoned by a small company of Indian infantry. But life on so confined and bare a spot, where all supplies must be imported, and water is only obtainable from condensers, is extremely tedious; and the troops are, if possible, relieved every few months.

Perim is governed from Aden; the next landmarks on the ocean highway, Socotra and its dependencies of Abdal Kute and Bromers, are administered from Bombay.

The island of Socotra, which was known to the Greeks as Dioscorides—the legend of an ancient Greek colony there survived for centuries among Arab geographers— Socotra, 1886.
was imagined by them to be an island abode of bliss. A very different account was given by St. Francis Xavier, the great evangelist who visited Socotra in 1542, thirty-six years after its discovery by Tristan da Cunha. 'A wild country,' he wrote, 'with no produce, no corn, no rice, no millet, no wine, no fruit; in short, altogether sterile and arid, except that it has plenty of dates, and also abounds in cattle. The island is exposed to great heat from the sun; the people are Christians in name rather

than in reality, wonderfully ignorant and rude; they cannot read or write.' The description was not inaccurate; but the Nestorian Christianity of the inhabitants, a mixed breed of Arabs, Somalis, and a few Europeans, gave way later before Islám or paganism. Socotra became a favourite station of corsairs and pirates; and, to check their depredations, British Indian troops occupied the place for a few months in 1835, but eventually withdrew. In 1876, however, the Sultan of Kishn, the owner of the island, agreed not to permit any foreign power to interfere in the affairs of the island; ten years later it was placed under British protection.

The Kuria Maria Islets, which lie off the south coast of Arabia, were discovered in 1503 by the Portuguese. Sterile and bare as the neighbouring mainland, their sole product is guano; but they were ceded to Britain in 1854 by the Sultan of Muscat for the purpose of landing the Red Sea cable. They still remain integral but insignificant portions of the empire.

Maldives, etc., 1795.

The long chain of coral islands known as the Maldives, where endless palms fringe endless lagoons, has passed from one European nation to another as political power waxed or waned in the Orient. Successively Portuguese, French, and Dutch possessions, they fell with Ceylon to the British in 1795. But the principle of non-intervention in the local affairs of the archipelago has been adopted. A petty sultan still reigns over twelve thousand petty isles, and Malé remains the seat of government; an annual tribute is paid to the authorities in Ceylon; and that country furnishes a market for the products of the Maldives. The natives of the islands, who are followers of Islám, are celebrated for the kindness with which they succour the shipwrecked strangers who are cast upon their dangerous coasts from time to time.

The Laccadive Isles differ from the Maldives, to the north

of which they lie, in being less productive. The religion and character of the natives is similar, but they are governed from Madras.

On the other side of India lie the Andaman Isles, to which are attached Cocos. Consisting of four large and many smaller volcanic groups, their total area is some 2700 square miles, most of which is mountainous and covered with dense tropical vegetation. Hot, damp, and malarious, the Andamans have the reputation of being extraordinarily unhealthy; but the death-rate of the Indians transported thither is not more than 30·7 per thousand, while the condition of the British troops is better than at Rangun.

The islands were taken in 1789 by the East India Company, and a settlement was established at Port Blair, then called Port Cornwallis. Three years later this was abandoned as too unhealthy; but in 1849 a Captain Shaw attempted to found a colony on Great Coco. Again the climate proved deadly; a third of his people died; those who survived suffered terrible hardships. In 1857, however, the Andamans were occupied by the Indian Government as a penal station; Indian natives convicted of grave crimes, and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, were sent thither; and the place has ever since been used for that purpose. Some ten thousand convicts are detained there, guarded by British and natives troops and police. The discipline is severe and possibly reformative; after some years the offender is permitted a modified freedom, and is henceforth known as a 'self-supporter'; should he not abuse his privileges, he is allowed in his declining years to return to his own country.[1]

The more southerly Nicobar Islands, which are divided into two groups, the Great and Little, are administered by the Chief Commissioner of the Andamans.

[1] The Andaman aborigines, an inoffensive but suspicious people, have the distinction of being probably the most intensely black race in the world. (Portman.)

The group of islets known as Keeling, which lie in the Indian Ocean south of Sumatra, and whose whole surface is but eight miles square, were discovered, according to Purchas, by the English mariner William Keeling, on his way home from the Moluccas in 1609. Though fertile and healthy, they remained unpeopled until 1823, when an Englishman of dubious or eccentric character named Hare settled on one of the group with a few Malay slaves, who formed the harem and the court of this imitation oriental despot. Hare's project failed; but the old Scottish family of Clunies-Ross occupied another of the Keeling Isles about this time; and since then, despite the terrific tropical storms which often threaten to swallow these petty intruders on the vast expanse of waters, the lonely group has never been uninhabited.

Keeling Islands, 1823.

In view of their comparative proximity to the Dutch colony of Sumatra, the Dutch at one time advanced a tentative claim to their possession; but the islands were formally annexed by Britain in 1856. The Ross family, however, continues to hold patriarchal sway in local affairs; and neither police nor soldiers are required to maintain their authority. Crime is rare, and money does not exist in this primitive but happy community; the only currency that is known are the sheepskin notes issued by the Rosses.[1]

By far the most noteworthy event in the insignificant Keeling annals was the visit of Charles Darwin in 1836. He found the islands 'not very prosperous, and with rather a desolate aspect, no gardens to show signs of care and cultivation.' But these typical lagoon atolls furnished him with much valuable scientific information, which bore fruit in his work, *Geological Observations on Coral Reefs*.

An attempt was made to colonise Christmas Island, which

[1] An obituary notice of George Clunies-Ross, and a good account of the colonisation of these islands, appeared in the London *Times* on 8th July 1910.

was first visited by Dampier two centuries before, from the Keelings. It was eventually occupied by the British in 1888; twelve miles long and five broad, it is thickly wooded, and possesses valuable deposits of phosphate of lime.

Such are the various stations which mark the ocean highway to the East, from Gibraltar to India and Australia. Individually they are often insignificant, perhaps even worthless; collectively they form an important and valuable chain.

But the great wars which saw the acquisition of these landmarks on the ocean road as well as the greater provinces of empire, saw also the capture of other more isolated spots, whose history has little connection with that of Britain or any of her colonies.

Such, for example, was the barren rock of Heligoland, or Holy Island: three-quarters of a mile in extent, but gradually giving way before the action of the waves, and with a population of two thousand fishermen. At present a summer resort of German tourists, it belonged to Denmark till 1807, and was used both before and from that time, when it fell into the hands of England, as a base for smuggling. At the peace of 1815 it was secured to Britain; but its history is almost a blank. The old Frisian constitution to which its inhabitants had been accustomed was preserved till 1864, when another of British origin took its place. Four years later this was withdrawn, and all authority was vested in the Governor. Nothing more of interest marked the eighty-three years during which it was part of the British Empire, and it was exchanged with Germany in 1890 for some concessions in Africa. From the English point of view, Heligoland was useless in peace, and dangerous in war; from the German, its acquisition seemed at the time a satisfactory step forward in the linking-up of the great modern Teutonic Empire, which had been so long divided into petty conflicting states, but which from the day of Rossbach has been steadily marching forward to a

Heligoland, 1807-90.

federation of all the German settlements in Europe, and which in our time lacks only the Austrian provinces and the Baltic colonies in Russia to mark the completion of the pan-German imperial dream of which Fichte was the first and the most eloquent exponent.

Ascension, 1815.

Another island acquired in the Napoleonic wars was Ascension, a volcanic rock thirty-four miles square in the South Atlantic Ocean, which had been discovered by the Portuguese in 1501. At first named Conception from being found on Lady Day, it was later called Ascension by a second visitor who arrived at the island on that festival in 1503. Nominally a possession of Portugal, it was a convenient place at which passing ships could leave any malefactors they might have on board; but no real colony could be established where only ferns and grasses grew. In the eighteenth century turtle fishing was carried on there, and it was occupied by the British in 1815. A settlement was made at the one place which afforded anchorage, and the little town which rose here was officially named Georgetown in 1830. Since then it has been used as an admiralty station, and Darwin compared it to 'a huge ship kept in first-rate order.' On a small scale, the same policy which has been so successful in the greater colonies was followed at Ascension; roads were made, plants and shrubs were introduced, and the none too abundant supply of water collected and preserved. At Georgetown, a church, a hospital, and barracks now exist: and the population numbers some 160 settlers and a garrison. If it cannot be said that the island is of much value to the empire, at least it might be a source of danger in foreign hands.

Tristan da Cunha, 1816.

We next come to almost the most insignificant inhabited spot in the whole British Empire—Tristan da Cunha, in comparison with which Ascension seems a powerful state. The first European to see this island of sixteen square miles, whose sole products were stunted trees,

brushwood, ferns, and coarse grass, was Albuquerque; and to him, wearied by a long sea voyage, it appeared a 'land very extensive and very beautiful.' That he was mistaken may be shown from the fact that, although Dutch and French vessels called there from time to time, and the English East India Company thought of using it as a port of call for their vessels, the earliest settlers were three Americans in 1810. Annexed by England in 1816, a garrison was kept there for a few months only; but when this was withdrawn, a corporal, his wife, two children, and two other single men remained. Such was the beginning of the colony, which was increased later by some stray arrivals.

Its petty annals have not been without vicissitudes. Many of the younger men have emigrated to South Africa, or taken to the sea; and owing to this cause the population has fluctuated from 109 in 1880, to 52 in 1893; ten years later it had again risen to 75. All live in one township, which is called Edinburgh, on account of a visit paid by the Duke of that name in 1857: and a hard, perhaps inadequate, livelihood is gained by breeding cattle, sheep, and donkeys. But in spite of the rough conditions which surround their existence the inhabitants have on several occasions refused the offer of the Imperial Government to transport them elsewhere.

The system of rule is patriarchal, and Tristan da Cunha is directly under the control of England; periodical visits are made by vessels of the navy. These, with the calls of occasional whaling ships, are the only means of communication with the outside world. The two neighbouring islands, named Nightingale and Inaccessible, are uninhabited.[1]

More important in point of size and population are the Falkland Islands. Discovered on 14th August 1592 by John Davis, called Hawkins' Maiden Land by Hawkins two years

[1] The fullest account of life on this island is contained in a diary of *Three Years in Tristan da Cunha*, published in 1910 by Mrs. K. M. Barrow.

later in honour of himself and Queen Elizabeth, they were given their present name in 1670: but nobody thought of a settlement there until Anson, in the account of his voyage round the world, published in 1748, remarked on the convenience of possessing a station and port of call in the southern Atlantic. The project was abandoned on the urgent representations of Spain; and the French, with some of their people who had left Canada after the British conquest, founded the first Falkland colony in 1764. They were soon expelled by the Spaniards; but the English arrived the next year. After five years they also were driven out: and it was through this high-handed action on the part of Spain that war was threatened from London. In the end the British Government backed down; and the whole affair would have long been forgotten, were it not that Samuel Johnson wrote a pamphlet in their defence, while Junius attacked them.

Falkland Islands, 1765.

The islands caused yet another international dispute before they came finally into British hands. In 1820 they were taken by the republic of Buenos Ayres; but eleven years afterwards the settlement was destroyed by the United States as a measure of reprisal for some wrong done. In 1832 they were again taken by England, and used by the Admiralty, although there was some intention of converting them eventually into a penal settlement, in accordance with the settled policy then pursued at Downing Street, which held that the first use to which every new colony should be put was as a dumping ground for convicts. From this fate they were saved; in 1843 a civil government was instituted; and since then the Falkland Isles have been a crown colony, with a Governor, and Executive and Legislative Councils: surely a sufficient apparatus of rule for a country whose capital of Stanley has only some nine hundred inhabitants, and whose population altogether numbers little more than two thousand. In 1851 the Falkland Islands Company was

formed, in whose hands nearly all the trade of the place has been concentrated; the chief settlers are Scotsmen, who by continuous hard work make a living in islands described by Darwin as 'undulating with a desolate and wretched aspect,' and by another visitor in the *Challenger* as 'a treeless expanse of moorland and bog and bare and barren rock.'

Nearly all the British colonies, however small, reproduce in essentials the constitution of the mother country; in many cases they furnish a microcosm of the empire by administering protectorates of their own. The Australian Commonwealth is responsible for various groups in the Pacific; New Zealand possesses a whole cluster of islands; Tristan da Cunha guards its two neighbours; and the Governor of the Falkland Islands is in like manner Governor of South Georgia, an uninhabited tract of land in the Antarctic. First seen by the French voyager La Roche in 1675, it was visited a century later by Captain Cook, whose account of it was graphic but uninviting: 'The wild rocks raised their lofty summits till they were lost in the clouds, and the valleys lay covered with everlasting snow. Not a tree was to be seen, nor a shrub even big enough to make a toothpick.'

South Georgia, 1775.

Of equal importance is another derelict of empire, Gough Island, which was probably discovered by the Spaniard Diego Alvarez, but visited by Captain Gough in 1731, and claimed by him for England. Still considered as a British possession, it is enough to say that no ship ever touches there, and that nobody has ever lived, or seems likely to live on its desolate shores.

Gough Island, 1731.

CHAPTER V

THE FINAL RECKONING: 1815

With the escape of Napoleon from Elba in 1815 began the last act in the great world-drama which gave to France the troubled possession of Europe for a decade, and to Britain the undisputed possession of the outer world for a century. Napoleon reckoned, and he reckoned justly, on the respect and admiration, if not love, which France bore him. He knew that the king who had been set up in his place was but a puppet of the diplomats. He knew that the army—his army—was discontented and mutinous. He believed that they longed again for the victories to which he had led them; that they preferred even defeat under him to peace under a Bourbon. And in France, the army often decides for the nation. Napoleon landed in Provence and marched without opposition to Paris. Louis XVIII. fled at once, and Europe prepared to renew the conflict.

Waterloo, 1815.

But the close of the career that had electrified the world was at hand. The revived empire lasted for a hundred days: and then in the carnage of Waterloo it went down for ever. The man who had risen from a humble family in Corsica to be the master of a continent fell before the coalition his vast schemes had raised.

The place destined for Napoleon's last years in captivity was one of the most lonely islands of the world—one of those barren rocks that a visitor from another planet might think even our combative humanity would have left in peace. But small, barren, and unattractive as it was, St. Helena already had its history as the outpost of rival empires. Discovered on 21st May 1502 by the Portuguese, it had been used by them as a port of call on the

St. Helena, 1651.

way from the Indies. For many years they were the only visitors, but when the English traffic to the Orient began to grow it was seized by our East India Company in 1651. James Fort, or Jamestown as it has since been called, was erected there, being named in honour of the Duke of York. In 1665, and again in 1673, the Dutch took St. Helena, but in each case they were driven out after a few months, and from that time our possession of it has been undisturbed.

With the cessation of attacks by foreign traders its history ceased to present anything of interest. There were the usual quarrels between the governor and the chaplain, the usual semi-mutinies among the garrison, which invariably appear in colonies where space is limited and time hangs heavy. The population consisted of employees of the East India Company, casual settlers, and negro slaves: in 1723 St. Helena contained 500 whites and 610 blacks, a number which increased steadily but not rapidly, and generally in the same proportion of colour. In subsequent generations the prevalent custom of intermarriage produced a mixed class of people, who remain in the island to this day.

It was to this lonely spot which, in Darwin's words, rises abruptly 'like a huge black castle from the ocean,' that Napoleon was banished, to eat out his heart in captivity, vexed by the unworthy spite of his jailor, Sir Hudson Lowe. 'C'est un sot personnage que celui d'un roi exilé et vagabond,' he had written to his brother in the days when Europe lay at his feet: and now that in less than twenty years his ambition had carried him from simple republican general to Emperor of the West, conqueror of Egypt and Palestine, victor in Rome, Vienna, Berlin, Madrid, Moscow, Amsterdam, Brussels, and down again to querulous captive of his inveterate enemy, he could meditate on an epigram he had applied to another, but which in the end applied only to himself.

For nearly six years he lived in St. Helena, surrounded by

a few faithful friends, reading and studying the military history of the past, or dictating records of his own campaigns; the latter almost the only pleasure now left him. 'They are of granite; envy cannot bite at them,' he exclaimed once when speaking of the judgment which posterity would pass on his achievements on European battlefields.

On 5th May 1821, Napoleon died of cancer in the stomach. His remains were interred at St. Helena; but in 1840 they were brought to Paris, where they rest fittingly to this day, among the other great heroes of France.

With the death of its illustrious captive the prosperity of St. Helena seemed to vanish, as if in revenge for the harshness with which he had been treated. In 1834 the island was ceded by the East India Company to the nation, when it became a crown colony. But it had only been useful as a station for sailing vessels, and with the introduction of steam longer journeys could be made without putting into port; and after the Suez Canal was opened it soon lay altogether out of the beaten track. Still maintained as a naval and till recently as a military station, it possesses a certain strategic importance: as a commercial settlement its use is practically negligible.

The battle of Waterloo decided something greater than the fall of Napoleon. It was the end of the world-struggle. The first bitter contest between the great powers of Europe for the control of the outer world ended definitely with the capture of the French Emperor. It had begun with the discovery of America and the new route to the Indies.

The End of the World-Struggle.

For a century Spain and Portugal had been supreme. Then the rebellion of the Netherlands, the defeat of the Armada, and the insults to the Spanish and Portuguese flags on the high seas marked the decay of the empires that had aspired to universal dominion.

In their place, and on the ruins of their power, rose four great nations, France, England, Holland, and Sweden, to dispute the prize. The latter, as the head of a great Scandinavian federation, seemed at one time about to take a great part in developing the extra-European lands. But her material resources were small, and they were wasted on the brilliant but useless exploits of her royal family in Germany and Russia. The union of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway was never thoroughly accomplished, and the possibility of a new Sweden overseas vanished under the stern competition of the three remaining powers.

Of those three, Holland was for a time the most successful. The sailors who manned her ships, the citizens who directed her commerce, the settlers who founded New Amsterdam in one hemisphere and Batavia in the other, procured her a magnificent range of territory.

But the great trading empire of Holland was only too literally a house built on the sand. The dominions at home were small. They were constantly threatened by the full force of the North Sea, which had already destroyed half of them. Not less dangerous was the enmity of human rivals. England was frequently at war with Holland, and a large part of the Dutch colonies soon acknowledged the British flag. France was likewise covetous of the goodly heritage on her northern frontier. Louis XIV. laid rough hands on the Netherlands, but was beaten back. Under Napoleon, however, Holland was reduced, in fact if not in name, to a mere province of the French Empire. At his fall, the independence of the country was restored and guaranteed, and many of the oversea possessions were given back. The kingdom is to-day positively greater than ever, but relatively it has declined, and its share in the world-struggle was merely passive after the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713.

There remained two great nations to dispute the universe

in the eighteenth century. The contest, indeed, between France and England was not new. For the last four centuries of the Middle Ages they had been rivals. It was France that sustained the shock when the Plantagenets endeavoured to found a continental empire. It was the French who finally drove the English off the European mainland, and thus shattered the illusion that misled all our rulers from William the Conqueror to Queen Mary.

But the contest for Europe was hardly at an end, when the two nations were pitted against each other overseas. French and English fishermen were already ill-disguised enemies off the coast of Newfoundland. A few years later French and English merchants were bidding against each other in the marts of Bengal; French and English politicians were negotiating against each other in the courts of Indian princes. In Africa, the little settlements of either nation were deadly rivals. In America, the colonists of Canada and New England were jealous of each other's success.

The Seven Years' War brought the quarrel to a head. Everywhere outside Europe, England was victorious. The French were driven from Asia and America. The colonies that remained to them were small, but valuable. Again they attempted to build up an empire overseas. Again the Napoleonic wars gave England her opportunity. Again the French colonies fell into the hands of England, along with many of the Dutch. And at the Congress of Vienna in 1814 the greater part of all these territories were finally made over to Britain.

From that time the lead of Britain in colonising has never been questioned. France has created another colonial empire, greater and more prosperous than the first; Germany and Italy have entered the competition for overseas territory; Russia has extended her sway in marvellous fashion over the barbaric regions of Central Asia. But in mere size the British

Empire is by far the largest. Its territories are indisputably the most fertile. Its system of government, whether democratic or despotic, is the best yet obtained, although evidently not the best obtainable. Since the fall of Napoleon the British have been engaged in great and terrible wars in all parts of the world, but the general ideal of the empire has happily been peace: and it may be said that, while England would neither have acquired nor kept her empire had she feared the appeal to the sword, she would also have been unable to develop it, in so far as it has been developed, had it not been that her first wish was for peace.

The history of the British Empire, so far as we have followed it at present, has been mainly one of conflict, from the day that Drake ventured into the charmed circle of the Indies, till the day that Nelson drove the French out of Egypt and off the high seas. But we have still to follow the progress of our people during the century that has elapsed from the end of the world-struggle to our own time: and the latter period is far more absorbing and of far more importance, for it tells of the foundation of British institutions and the growth of the British race in all parts of the earth; it speaks of the energy that has gone to create great states and splendid civilisations where previously the wallaby and the dingo, the tiger, the leopard, or the bison have roamed unchecked; it proves that, in contact with native races, we have endeavoured to deal uprightly and wisely, in spite of the temptations to which we have too frequently succumbed; and it shows that, wherever our people may be, in the middle of Asia, in the deserts of Africa, or in the yet waste up-country of Australia, they have still remained true to the old British stock whose proud boast it has ever been that they possess liberty with order, and a high standard of duty with the courage to do it. God in his mercy grant that the future which stretches before us may be as glorious as the past;

that we may neither be blind to our opportunities nor unjust to others in laying hold of them; and that when the hour of danger comes, as assuredly it will, we may not be found lacking in the will and the power to stand firm in defence of our own.

END OF VOLUME THE SECOND

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